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Reception and analysis of Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian aesthetics in the writing and choreographic practice of Six Dance Figures: 1900-1948

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Reception and Analysis of Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian Aesthetics in the Writing and Choreographic Practice of Six Dance Figures: 1900-1948

by

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how Friedrich Nietzsche's two original aesthetic concepts, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, helped to articulate the self-understandings of modern dance and ballet in the writing and choreographic practice, produced between 1900 and 1948, of six key figures in the history of Western concert dance: Akim Volynsky (1861-1926), Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), Mary Wigman (1886-1973), Oskar Schlemmer (1888-1943), John Martin (1893-1985), and Lincoln Kirstein (1907- 1996). As partially inspired by the identities of romanticism and classicism, the formulations created by Nietzsche (1844-1900) provided a set of ideas that helped to communicate the tensions between two early twentieth-century, concomitant dance movements: modern dance and neoclassical ballet. In *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche conceptualised the Apollonian to signify rationality, purity, order and the individual; and these values were employed to help articulate the neoclassical ballet aesthetics of Volynsky, Schlemmer and Kirstein—the latter in reference to George Balanchine's neoclassical works. Nietzsche designated the Dionysian to signify ecstasy, sensuality, chaos and the communal; and these values were instrumental in the formulations of modern dance aesthetics by Duncan, Wigman and Martin— the latter in reference to Martha Graham's works. Expanding upon pioneering scholarship devoted to Nietzsche and dance, this thesis also examines the scholarly discussions about Nietzsche's diverse references to dance in his philosophical works. The

methodology of the present research is based on the conceptualisation of 'interpretive' social science by the sociologist Max Weber. According to Weber, concepts can be used to achieve an interpretation of historical movements through a reconstruction of social actors' self-understandings. The actors themselves, that is to say, the artists and dance writers analysed in this work often expressed their intentions, purposes and opinions in terms of the Apollonian-Dionysian opposition, as defined by Nietzsche. This project seeks to reconstruct, clarify, and synthesise the attempts at self-understanding of the historical actors under study.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis has not been submitted previously for a degree. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis has been written by me. The support that I received during the process of researching and writing this thesis is detailed in the acknowledgements.

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Introduction

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) above all other philosophers championed dance (Burt 1990: 24; Hutter, 2006: 180). He began to show his interest in the expressive body already in 1870, as a young scholar, when he gave two public lectures about the origins and workings of the Ancient Greek tragedy (Nietzsche, 2013a, 2013b). These lectures helped to fertilise his formulation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian, as subsequently defined in *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (1872), hereinafter referred to as *BOT*.

While Nietzsche designated the Apollonian as expressive of rationality, purity, order and the individual, he designated the Dionysian as expressive of ecstasy, sensuality, disorder and the communal. The opposition of Apollonian and Dionysian artistic impulses (*Kunsttriebe*) served as a basic analytical device in *BOT*.[1] The idea of the gods Apollo and Dionysus as designations for aesthetic orientations, or more generally for cultural norms and values, was a significant feature of religious and artistic life in Ancient Greece. Rediscovered in Renaissance Europe, the opposition of the two gods became prominent among Romantic and neoclassical authors, and it was very influential in the Weimar neoclassicism of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

[1] Although Nietzsche's terms in U.K. English are most often designated as the Apolline and the Dionysiac, I will be employing the alternative designations, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. This is because the dance figures who serve as my case studies overwhelmingly referred to the formulations by Nietzsche as such, in their writing or in the translations of their writings into English.

and Friedrich Schiller, which had a major impact on Nietzsche (Bishop and Stephenson, 1999). Nevertheless, the elaboration of the issue by Nietzsche gave to the antagonism of Apollo and Dionysus a new centrality. On its basis, the German philosopher proposed a new foundation for the discipline of aesthetics, a critical understanding for the role of arts in society, and a radical denunciation of modern culture. Nietzsche's terms expressed a much broader and controversial category of thinking: how Western culture's development since the golden age of Classical Greece had consistently undermined the Dionysian and privileged the Apollonian. The result, argued Nietzsche, was a modernity enervated by its own value system.

For Nietzsche, as to be discussed in chapter 1, modernity is defined, among other elements, by the cultural hegemony of science and logic, which leads to the loss of myth as the unifying cultural realisation that was manifested in Ancient Greek tragedy. In *BOT*, Nietzsche accordingly described the modern individual as 'abstract man', and he cautioned that 'abstract man, without guidance from myth, abstract education, abstract morality, abstract law […] is condemned to exhaust every possibility' (Nietzsche, 1999: 108). This concept of modernity as the loss of the unifying power of myth, or demystification, was going to have a substantial influence on sociological approaches to the studies of modern societies.

One of the most influential definitions of modernity, precisely as 'demystification of the world' by Max Weber, was clearly inspired by Nietzsche, as sociologist Franz Solms-Laubach (2007: 86) indicated. Furthermore, in Nietzsche's perception,

Western optimism—which was based on a scientific civilisation, with its beginning in the pioneering contributions to rationality and science in Ancient Greece—appeared to be falling deeper and deeper into a kind of pervasive pessimism. As musicologist Stephen Downes has remarked, 'decadent pessimism' was for Nietzsche 'the path of the weary, exhausted modern subject' (Downes, 2010: 66). In *BOT*, Nietzsche idealistically sought a re-evaluation of values in which the balancing of the Apollonian with the Dionysian would remedy cultural and social malaise. He believed artists and artistic creations were society's guiding lights (Nietzsche, 1999: 15). Nietzsche's call for the re-balancing of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses had a significant impact on the arts (Jones, 2013; Mazour-Matusevich, 2009), philosophy (Dews, 1999; Habermas, 1987), social sciences (Weber, 1994), literature (Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012), psychoanalysis (Nägele, 1987), and anthropology (Benedict, 1989).

Nietzsche's specific impact on dance was no less significant. Since the early twentieth century, the concepts of the Apollonian and Dionysian have been mentioned in dance-oriented discussions, usually in connection to discourses on modern dance and neoclassical ballet. The modern dance pioneers Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), Mary Wigman (1886-1973), and Martha Graham (1894-1991) explicitly postulated the Dionysian as an aesthetic orientation in contrast with, or even in opposition to, ballet (Ragona, 1994; Lamothe, 2006). Meanwhile, renowned Russian dance critics Akim Volynsky and André Levinson (1887-1933) advocated for ballet in categorically Apollonian terms, as a calculated counterpoint to the

Dionysian ideals of modern dance (Rabinowitz, 2008: xxvi-xxviii; Levinson, 1982: 42). Apollonian dance aesthetics gained further recognition with the Bauhaus artist Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* in 1922. Schlemmer (1888-1943) sought to reinvent ballet as abstract art, which he wrote, 'becomes strict and Apollonian in its final form' (Schlemmer, 1972: 128). Yet it was the success of *Apollon musagète* (renamed *Apollo* in 1957) by Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and George Balanchine (1904-1983) and their long-term collaboration that established neoclassical ballet as the dance style most emphatically associated with Apollonian norms and values (Croce, 1982: 109). One of the arguments that the ballet scholar Tim Scholl made in his text, *From Petipa to Balanchine, Classical Revival and the Modernization of Ballet* (1994), was that neoclassicism descended out of Petipa and reached its apotheosis in the work of Balanchine. This belief was similarly and previously expressed by the prolific dance writer Lincoln Kirstein (1991: 125, 185), who was responsible for bringing Balanchine to the United States in 1933. Meanwhile, John Martin (1893-1985), the first dance critic of *The New York Times*, connected the Dionysian with modern dance, particularly in his discussion of Graham. The fact that its 1930s modern dance practitioners, argued Martin, sought to express socio-political realities (Franko 2002), revealed a fundamentally Dionysian impulse, one where their achievements signaled they were the true offspring of Ancient Greek tragedy (Martin, 1942a: 12; 1965: 174). The association of Ancient Greek dance to a revitalisation of contemporary dance culture was likewise forwarded by Volynsky, in the 1920s, and Kirstein, from the 1930s. For them, however, it was ballet--not modern dance--that was the artform expressive of Ancient Greece.

Given that Nietzsche's Ancient Greek mythological binary concepts allowed writers and practitioners to categorise certain aspects of dance culture, and these concepts were never absolutely oppositional, the appropriation of the Dionysian and Apollonian formulations by dance figures led to complex and sometimes conflicting beliefs and statements. These complex discussions, with their ambiguous tendencies, are carefully examined in this thesis through the contrast of three pairs of modern dance and ballet figures, as carried out through a comparative analysis undertaken through close readings in autobiographical, biographical and scholarly texts. The first case study, in chapter 3, focusses on the American-born modern dance artist Duncan and the Russian ballet critic, pedagogue and religious philosopher Volynsky. In chapter 4, the German modern dance artist Wigman and the German Bauhaus choreographer and visual artist Schlemmer are comparatively discussed. The third and final case study compares two influential New York dance critics and writers: Martin and Kirstein. All three case studies are based on the following affinities shared between the aforementioned paired modern dance and ballet figures: 1) Both produced in the same era; 2) the two contrasting figures shared the same geographical locale, and therefore a national-cultural experience for their lifetimes, or for a crucial period of time; 3) they debated or criticised one another; and, 4) they employed Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian concepts, as partially inspired by the identities of classicism and romanticism, to support combative positions around two dance movements, modern dance and neoclassical ballet, during the movements' formative stages: 1900 to 1948.

Martin and Kirstein's contrasting analysis has a particular but interesting complication because those two New York dance critics and writers, for reasons that will be discussed in chapter 5, changed at some point their perspectives in respect to modern dance and neoclassical ballet. Martin was a fierce apologist for modern dance until 1948, when his disparagement of Balanchine's neoclassical works underwent a profound re-evaluation (Martin, 1948a). Yet prior to 1948, and particularly in the 1930s, Martin wrote several books in support of modern dance as the American art form, while casting aspersion on ballet and, by association, Balanchine. For example, In *America Dancing*: *The Background and Personalities of the Modern Dance* (1938), Martin argued that ballet was a 'colonial-grade European art' (Martin 1968, 37). Kirstein, who in 1948 co-founded with Balanchine the New York City Ballet, uncharacteristically wrote in support of Graham to the Guggenheim Foundation director as the United States entered World War II (Kirstein cited in Duberman, 2007: 386). Yet a decade earlier, in his private correspondences, Kirstein described Graham's aesthetics in searing, scatological terms (Haslam and Kirstein, 1932, cited in Duberman, 2007: 200). Upon the tenth celebration of the New York City Ballet, Kirstein invited Graham to co-choreograph a ballet, *Episodes*, with Balanchine. Graham recalled in her memoir *Blood Memory* (1991) that, 'Lincoln, I think, was still trying to get back at me for standing up to him throughout the years. He suggested that Balanchine and I do a ballet together, hoping, I learned later, that my effort would fall flat on its feet' (Graham cited in Kane, 2007: 56; Graham, 1991: 234). According to Martin, *Episodes* was a success

(Martin, 1959). However, it failed to be a collaboration: Graham and Balanchine made two separate sections that had almost no relationship to each other. *Episodes* demonstrated that Balanchine's neoclassical ballet and Graham's modern dance could not find common ground.

To foreground this project's hypothesis, regarding the impact of Nietzsche's formulations on the aforesaid six dance figures, the first part of the research investigates Nietzsche's discussions of dance in order to support two interlocking theses: 1) the relatively unexamined connections between ballet, the Apollonian and heteronormative values in contradistinction to 2) the connections between modern dance, the Dionysian and critical attitudes toward conventional gender roles, which have been the subject of some scholarly discussion (Lamothe, 2006; Manning, 1993; Ragona, 1994). Early twentieth-century modern dance artists promulgated the idea of an impulsive and ecstatic artistic practice that mediated and critiqued a logocentric world (Copeland and Cohen, 1983: 186; Toepfer, 1997: 382). Modern dance practitioners tended to be critical of heteronormative values, and the art form's origins have been accordingly associated with female artists who defied conventional gender roles in their careers and in their self-presentations, while explicitly advocating for Dionysian aesthetics in their writings and artworks (Toepfer, 1997: 334). In contrast, ballet artists and their apologists of this era tended to embrace heteronormative values. Of course, there were always exceptions, such as the choreography of Bronislava Nijinska (Garafola 1992, 1987,

2011). In sum, Volynsky, Schlemmer and Kirstein presented and discussed gendered relations in relatively conventional frameworks, as opposed to the more critical attitudes towards gender conventions forwarded by Duncan, Wigman and Martin.

Terminology and Historical Slippage

Some of this project's terminology merits unpacking since terms develop and continuously shift as a consequence of differing eras, countries, and socio-political contexts, as well as because of influences from key figures and new aesthetic movements. The term classical in dance can refer to a movement genre that has achieved an enduring and revered esteem among a significant body of people, whose privileged status—as often carried out through their writings about a group of comparable art works—confers upon them the capacity to convey in the public sphere that which is culturally valuable. Both ballet and modern dance, consequently, can be perceived as classical art forms with a canon, an 'organizational system' that is as 'relativist' as it is exclusionary (Dodds, 2014: 20). What has been deemed classical also concerns a dance form that has been carried forward through a lineage of practitioners who draw their understanding of their movement philosophy from their predecessors. An erroneous but well-versed notion of classicism is that it signifies 'purity' and 'authenticity' (Banarjee, 2015: 25). Both this study's modern dance and ballet figures pointed to these ideas to

make an argument for the value of their respective dance genres.

The definition of ballet is often carried out through a historical summarisation. In brief, ballet's lineage dates from the sixteenth century, if one perceives the Florentine Renaissance pageants organised by ruling families, such as the Medici's, as its point of origin; alternatively, ballet's lineage dates from the seventeenth century, if one perceives the founding of the *Académie Royale de Danse* in 1661 under France's King Louis XIV patronage as its origin point (Au, 2016). Given its history, ballet is aristocratic in origin. Yet like all dance forms, it is an amalgamation of diverse sources. Ballet can also be defined as that which comprises the *danse d'école*. The term refers to ballet's codified steps and corporeally specific forms, taught in ballet institutions and employed by ballet choreographers. Ballet dancers, teachers and choreographers speak of ballet as a language.

Because modern dance does not possess a shared language, the term has never been satisfactorily defined, nor has its specific origins been discussed with the same certainty as ballet's. According to the dance scholar Mark Franko, modern dance can be understood as an artistic movement shaped in response to ballet and created at the beginning of the twentieth century (Franko, 2016; 2002: 109). According to dance and religion scholar Kimerer LaMothe, Nietzsche's Dionysian aesthetics, which cast aspersion on Christian morality, helped define modern dance's ethos: one that can be characterised by rebelliousness against social mores, embrace of movement experimentation, and a dismantling of patriarchal

hierarchies (LaMothe, 2006: 7). Nietzsche, moreover, described the dancers of The Great Dionysia, whose origins are rooted in the chthonic cult of Dionysus, as expressing 'ecstasy and sublimity', and as 'belonging to a higher community' (Nietzsche, 1999: 8). Nietzsche's perception of dance as universal, ritualistic, but also unleashed, was subsequently forwarded by Duncan (Daly, 2002: 121-135; Ruyter, 1998), Wigman (Santos Newhall, 2010: 131) and Martin (Herthel, 1966: 264). However, the dance artist Rudolf Laban (1879-1958), to be discussed further, sought to articulate the expressive dance movement (the term for modern dance in Germany) in more practical terms. Conscious of ballet's enduring language, he developed a sign system to articulate the mechanics of the body in space; he hoped it would become an alternative *danse d'école*, open to all ages and bodies types (Preston-Dunlop, 1998: 37).

Returning to the issue of classicism, the term developed its significance in the Renaissance; it refers to an idealisation at this time of Ancient Greek culture (Morgan, 2018). Neoclassicism, in turn, is a term that scholars associate with the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, when 'interest in the reinterpretation of antiquity swept Europe and continued on to the United States' (Morgan 2018). It can be understood as a movement in negation of Baroque and rococo visual art styles. According to the art history scholar Ann Lee Morgan,

> the more disciplined and morally didactic neoclassicism often approached the antique with a fresh appreciation for correctness, stimulated by Enlightenment rationalism as well as recent archeological discoveries…[Neoclassicism] suggest[s] the classical qualities of restraint, harmony, rational order, and noble grandeur.

(Morgan, 2018)

Neoclassical ballet, unlike neoclassical art, is a relatively new phenomenon. The *Oxford Dictionary of Dance* (2010) describes it as

> A style of 20th-century classical ballet exemplified by the works of Balanchine. It draws on the advanced technique of 19th-century Russian Imperial dance but strips it of its detailed narrative and heavy theatrical setting. What is left is the dance itself, sophisticated but sleekly modern, retaining the pointe shoe aesthetic but eschewing the well-upholstered drama and mime of the full-length story ballet.
>
> (Craine and Mackrell, 2010)

Though this definition is too narrow, as it only mentions Balanchine, it intimates another common assumption, which concerns how neoclassical ballet as a genre originated with *Apollo* (originally *Apollon musagète*), created by Stravinsky and Balanchine (Adler, 1988). Besides Balanchine, the choreographers Bronislava Nijinska (1891-1972), Léonide Massine (1896-1979), and Frederick Ashton (1904-1988) made neoclassical works. However, Volynsky and Schlemmer, who predated all of these figures, wrote about and/or created works in which the hallmarks of their aesthetic—an interest in line and spatial geometry—were already in evidence.

Many of the descriptors for neoclassical ballet can also be applied to the term 'modernism', which in dance has been used to describe the aesthetics of both Graham and Balanchine (Jones, 2015; Harris, 2018). The blurry relationship between the definitions of neoclassical ballet, modern dance and modernism is illustrated in the *The Oxford World Encyclopedia.* It states that modernism is a 'Twentieth-century movement in art, architecture, design and literature that, *in general, concentrates on space and form, rather than content or ornamentation*'

('Modernism', 2004, italics, mine). Though this definition omits the performing arts, its language points to a central issue. Both modern dance and ballet practitioners in this study demonstrated a profound interest in 'space' and 'form' as well as a desire to strip their art of excess 'ornamentation'.

Perhaps because neoclassical ballet and modern dance can be described in modernist terms, there is no entry for either dance genre in *The International Encyclopedia of Dance* (IEOD) (Cohen, 1998). However, the IEOD, which remains an important reference for dance studies scholars, includes an entry for ballet technique (Hammond et. al., 1998). It describes the major schools, as well as the French codified positions of the body, its spatial facings, and connecting movements. The IEOD also contains an entry for modern dance technique, written by the dance critic and writer Deborah Jowitt (1998). It begins with a discussion that explains the difference between modern dance and ballet teachers: While the former taught and developed their techniques as a fulcrum for their dance making and performing, the latter's pedagogical careers usually began with the termination of their life on the stage (Jowitt, 1988). *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance*, in contrast to the IEOD, attempts a definition of modern dance:

> A term widely used in America and Britain to denote theatrical dance that is not based on the academic school of classical ballet. Through early 20th-century practitioners such as Isadora Duncan, Ruth St Denis, Martha Graham, and Doris Humphrey, modern dance developed in opposition to classical ballet, *rejecting the latter's structural formality and its occasionally frivolous subject matter*. *Modern dance pioneers eschewed the language of the danse d'école in favour of a freer movement style*—favouring bare feet over pointe shoes, for example, and a far more mobile use of the torso.

(Craine and Mackrell, 2010, italics, mine)

Significantly, this explanation is carried out by comparing modern dance to ballet, as is the case in the writings of the key figures in this study. *The Oxford Dictionary of Dance* entry appears to privilege the rigour of ballet. It states ballet employs a 'structural formality' that was rejected by Humphrey and Graham. Though the Humphrey-Limón technique does not have a set warm-up, its methodology is based on a written and practised set of formal principles (Stodelle, 1978). Moreover, Doris Humphrey's choreography is highly structural; her dictates for her architectural style of dance making are detailed in her manual, *The Art of Making Dances* (Humphrey, 1959). As for Graham's technique and works, they can hardly be characterised as 'free' ('Modern Dance', 2010). Perhaps the difficulty of adequately providing a definition of modern dance is that the 'structural formality' of the genre fluctuates with each practitioner's aesthetic. In this thesis, individual movement philosophies will be analysed not only in respect to the chosen modern dance figures, but also in respect to the chosen ballet figures.

To parse the relationships between modern dance, neoclassical ballet, and the social constructions of gender as expressed in Nietzsche's writings, the terms feminist and masculinist are employed in this project. Both terms relate to the self-understandings of gender. Although the term feminist is an historically evolving term, it concerns the demand for women's equal rights and privileges to those of men (Ring, 1987). The term masculinist concerns the advocation of male superiority and/or dominance (Karioris and Loeser, 2014). The terms, however, do not

presuppose a strict relationship to one's sex. A man, for example, can be a feminist and a woman can be a masculinist. Feminist and masculinist tensions orient themselves around the concept of social identity. The feminist scholar Gloria E. Anzaldúa explains that identity resembles a Janus face:

> Identity is not a singular activity or entity. It's in relationship to somebody else because you can't have a stand alone; there must be something you're bouncing off of […] Identity is not just what happens to me in my present lifetime but also involves my family history, my racial history, my collective history.
>
> (Anzaldúa 2000: 240)

Anzaldúa's discussion of gender echoes the slipperiness of the aforementioned terminological constructions. Each term requires an 'other' to express the significance of its meaning.

Nietzsche in Translation

Apart from the German-born artists Oskar Schlemmer and Mary Wigman, the other key dance figures in this study did not read Nietzsche in the original. What, then, did they fail to apprehend? According to the Nietzsche scholars Peter Newmark (1990), Stefan Manz (2007) and Duncan Large (2012), non-German readers miss out on Nietzsche's symphonic 'word play' and 'semantic richness', his assonance-driven and alliterative flourishes, which produce in the mind 'personal combination of sounds and meanings' (Newmark, 1990: 327-328). In sum, the author's 'sense of humor and mischief' in relationship to the porousness of his associated meanings are too often lost in translation (Large, 2012: 65). In contrast to Nietzsche's dare-devil, syntactically and metaphorically complex German, the

Anglo-Saxon language favours direct statements; its power and pithiness reside with its comparatively stunted phraseology. Unfortunately, English translations of Nietzsche's work, especially early translations, make Nietzsche sound didactic. This distortion of Nietzsche's voice in translation was most forcefully carried out by Alexander Tilles (1866-1912), a German professor and 'warmonger', who became the de facto source for the Anglo-Saxon world's understanding of Nietzsche until the 1950s (Large, 2012: 64). Tilles, who never met Nietzsche, 'had a social Darwinist reading of the philosopher's *oeuvre*'; essentially, he made Nietzsche sound like an ideologue (Manz, 2007: 117). Tilles might have influenced Duncan, Martin and Kirstein's understanding of Nietzsche. As for Volynsky, he likely read N.N. Polilov's 1899 Russian translation of *BOT* (Witt, 2007: 127). It too might have failed to express the mischievousness of the philosopher's ideas. As will be discussed, the dance figures in this study employed Nietzsche's binary terms forcefully and seriously; they posited an Agon: ballet versus modern dance. They likely misinterpreted the tone of Nietzsche's disquisition on the Apollonian and Dionysian. It was not delivered like a general giving orders on a battleground. It was envisioned by the poet-philosopher Nietzsche, whose energy and strength of purpose was seeded by his concepts' contradictory creative impulses.

An Enduring Interest in Two Dance Genres

The seeds of this project took root experientially, through two decades of modern dance and ballet practice in conservatory programs, dance festivals and New York dance studios. While being introduced to intensive studies in modern dance and

ballet as a teenager in the 1980s, I sensed but could not articulate the way in which the dancing philosophies of these two movement practices appeared so often at odds with each other. For example, my formative modern dance teachers—Sarah Stackhouse (Limón technique), Mel Wong (Cunningham technique), Kazuko Hirabayashi (Graham technique) and Milton Myers (Horton technique)—discussed the importance of individuality, emotion and spontaneity. These values were mostly absent in my training with my formative ballet teachers—Carol Sumner (New York City Ballet), Lawrence Rhodes (Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Joffrey Ballet, Harkness Ballet, Het National Ballet), and Finis Jhung (San Francisco Ballet, Joffrey Ballet, Harkness Ballet). In their classroom exercises, they emphasised discipline, harmony and emotional restraint. The philosophical differences between the opposing approaches to dance by these pedagogues, whose teachers professionalised in the 1930s and 1940s, were never openly discussed at my formative places of study, Purchase College Conservatory of Dance/State University of New York, Tisch School of the Arts/ New York University, and The School at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. I found these tensions somewhat troubling, as if I were being asked to incorporate two personae, two understandings of what defined the dancing body and profession, without much awareness and even less discussion of the contradictions.

One of the first books that I read following my decision to abandon conservatory dance training for a broader education was Nietzsche's *BOT*. In a New York University literature course devoted to modernism, I was assigned Nietzsche's text

and to my surprise, it offered a theory for how to understand the central paradox of being a dancer—one must be equal parts unbridled ecstasy and ordered restraint. Amazed at the performative quality of Nietzsche's text, which reminded me in its fervour and metaphorical word play of some of my more impassioned dance teachers' dictates, I was hungry to hear what my professor would say about the Dionysian and the Apollonian in respect to creative practice. Unfortunately, the subject of creativity, let alone dance, was never mentioned in my professor's lecture about Nietzsche's text.

It was not until 2011, when I met my now husband Agustín Ferraro, a political scientist trained in Argentina and Germany, that I inadvertently returned to Nietzsche's terminology while trying to describe to him some of the differences between mid-twentieth century modern dance and neoclassical ballet, of which I was writing in my capacity as *Musical America*'s dance critic. In that same year, 2011, Nietzsche's ideas resurfaced through my re-readings of various dance texts—including Duncan's *My Life* (1927), *The Mary Wigman Book: Her Writings* (1975), Kirstein's *Dance, A Short History of Classic Theatrical Dancing* (1935), and Graham's *Blood Memory* (1991)—in preparation for a two-semester Western theatrical dance history course I began teaching at The Juilliard School. The course was designed to correspond to Juilliard Dance Division's stated mission: to shape professional dancers through equal training in modern dance and ballet. This training is built upon the distinctive heritages of modern dance and ballet whose

philosophies were often in opposition to each other in the first half of the twentieth century. In 2013, I began my dissertation research, deciding first to examine the writings of the dance figures in the twentieth-century Western theatrical dance canon that comprised my undergraduate dance history courses with Deborah Jowitt and Camille Hardy, and my audited courses with Lynn Garafola and André Lepecki. To my fascination, Nietzsche's terminology, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, revealed itself in several dance figures' writings and programmes, as well as through the comments made about them by English language critics and scholars, especially in respect to Duncan, Wigman, Balanchine, Humphrey, Limón, and Graham.

In preparation for teaching at Juilliard, I began researching the Dance Division, whose programme commenced in 1951. The founding modern dance faculty were Graham, Humphrey, and Limón, with Anna Sokolow joining in 1958. All of these figures were born in the United States, with the exception of Limón, who was born in Mexico and immigrated as a boy to Arizona (Limón, 2001: 9). The founding ballet faculty at Juilliard were the British-born choreographer Antony Tudor and the Uruguayan-born Alfredo Corvino, formerly of Ballets Jooss. The Argentinian-born Héctor Zaraspe, known for his coaching of Margot Fonteyn and Rudolf Nureyev, joined the school in 1964. Significantly, Tudor and Corvino had no significant professional connection to Balanchine. They did, however, perform works by choreographers such as Kurt Jooss and Agnes de Mille, who trained in modern dance and ballet, and who combined the genres freely in their works. Zaraspe was

conversant in Spanish classical dance, having served as an assistant director of the Spanish ballet company Antonio [Ruiz Soler] Ballet de Madrid (Craine and Mackrell, 2010). By the 1970s, Juilliard's curriculum expanded to technical training in Spanish classical dance with Gloria Marina (1972-1994) and Indian classical dance with Indrani Rahman (1976-1998). These two dance genres were excised from the curriculum after two decades (Olmstead, 1999; Soares, 2009). The recently deceased director of the Juilliard Dance Division Lawrence Rhodes (1937-2019) told me that it was disadvantageous to train young dancers in too many techniques (Rhodes, 2015).

Despite the fact that Julliard's program has always offered classes in ballet and modern dance, it was not until the 1990s that its mission, to professionalise large numbers of hybrid ballet-modern dancers, realised itself. This change occurred with the directorships of the Americans Benjamin Harkarvy (1992-2002) and, most significantly, Lawrence Rhodes (2002-2017). Unlike the previous Juilliard directors, Martha Hill and Muriel Topaz, Harkarvy's professional background was in ballet and it was influenced by a career in Europe. In 1959 Harkarvy co-founded, with Aart Verstegen and Carel Birni of Dutch National Ballet, the Netherlands Dance Theater (NDT). NDT's mission was unique for its time, as it developed repertoire that showcased both modern dance and ballet works, and consequently trained its ballet dancers in Graham technique (Schaik, 1998). This ballet-modern training united into a distinctive style through the works of Jiří Kylián, who directed NDT from

1975-2004.

While NDT's modern-ballet hybrid vision took wing, its absorption into Juilliard did not happen overnight. Part of the slow change resided with the fact that from 1980 to 2002, Juilliard employed up to six Graham instructors; terminating their employment meant an important loss of their livelihoods (Rhodes, 2015). When Harkarvy's ballet colleague Rhodes took charge of the division in 2002, he added three full-time ballet faculty members, and increased the number of required ballet classes twofold (Rhodes, 2015). Moreover, he retained only one Graham technique teacher, Terese Capucilli. Rhodes also created annual performance programs for the students, which presented on a near-annual basis the works of NDT-associated choreographers, such as Kylián, William Forsythe, Mats Ek, Nacho Duato, Alexander Ekman, and Crystal Pite. Rhodes, a former principal ballet dancer, heralded for his interpretation in Rudi van Dantzig's *Monument to a Dead Boy* (Barnes 1973), further emphasised Juilliard's historical connections to Europe by commissioning the work of Pina Bausch, who studied at Juilliard in 1959, and to Batsheva Dance Theater director Ohad Naharin, who studied at Juilliard in 1977. Israel is not part of Europe, but many European transnational federations acknowledge the country as its member (Williams, 2015). As a consequence of Rhodes' European-oriented outlook, Juilliard dance alumni, increasingly began to fill the rosters of European companies, which sought hybrid-trained dancers. During Rhodes's fifteen-year tenure, he turned the programme into a performing centre in which high calibre student-dancers performed, on average, for the public five or six times per month.

The visibility of the school's talent was reflected in the fact *The New York Times* annually reviewed its two major concert series until 2018, when the paper's dance criticism was downsized.

With these developments under Rhodes' leadership, the majority of Juilliard's student dancers sought to join companies that historically possessed important ties to the school. Some of these companies are NDT, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, Lyon Opera Ballet, Batsheva Dance Company, The Martha Graham Dance Company, the José Limón Dance Company, and the Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company (formerly The Forsythe Company). These companies seek dancers with strong ballet and modern dance training. As a consequence of Juilliard's mission of equal training in these two dance genres, the dance students whom I have taught since 2011 became a further source of inspiration for my thesis question: Did Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian formulations provide a meaningful way to understand the tensions, from 1900 to 1948, between modern dance and ballet figures? I have wondered if these twenty-first century dance students were as intensely confronted, as I had been, by the philosophical conflicts between ballet and modern dance training. These considerations will be touched upon in this project's concluding chapter.

Pathways to Investigation

This dissertation evolved chronologically and through a comparative structure whereby I have worked to consider how a modern dance and a ballet figures, working in similar blocks of historical time, employed Nietzsche's concepts to situate their respective dance genre as the vanguard art form. I am indebted to the work of Mark Franko (2002) and Gay Morris (2006), who have taken seriously the notion that modern dance and ballet articulated themselves in opposition to each other. Their writings about this historical antagonism gave me a foundation for first considering how American-born modern dance pioneer Duncan and Volynsky appeared to be working with a Nietzschean language in the 1910s and 1920s, so as to define and forward their very different aesthetic projects. This discourse of aesthetic difference, I will argue, was also at work in the 1910s and 1920s in respect to German avant-garde modern dancer Wigman and the German avant-garde ballet choreographer/visual artist Schlemmer. With these two sets of oppositions from the teens and twenties, I considered the 1930s and 1940s. At that time, two of the most powerful mid-century American writers on dance, Martin and Kirstein, were publishing about modern dance and ballet in ways that clearly demonstrated, until 1948, that their perspectives were not impartial, but created through their fierce allegiances to Graham and Balanchine, respectively, the dance figures who, arguably, were the most visible leaders of the modern dance and neoclassical ballet movements in New York.

The present project also developed out of analyses from secondary and primary

texts about or written by Duncan, Wigman, and Martin. Additionally, the secondary texts used in this project discuss the aforesaid dance figures' Dionysian formulations (see Lamothe, 2006; Manning, 1993; Ragona, 1994). The project is also inspired by the far less examined analyses from secondary and primary texts about or written by Volynsky, Schlemmer, and Kirstein in respect to their employment of Nietzsche's Apollonian formulations, which have been only briefly referred to in dance scholars' works (see Randel, 2014; Homans, 2010; Scholl, 1994).

The primary root of my research stems from observations of modern dance and neoclassical ballet works I have seen in live performance over the past three decades. Since 2003, I have watched Balanchine and Graham's works by the companies that they founded on a near-annual basis. Of those choreographers whose performing entities have ceased, I have watched recorded footage, specifically of Duncan, Wigman and Schlemmer's dances, as performed by said individual or by others, such as Lori Belilove, a New York-based Duncan master teacher, Fabián Barba, who has dedicated himself to Wigman's dances, and Margaret Hastings who, with her colleagues, has reconstructed the dances of Schlemmer. I researched the six figures under study through observations of video and digitised recordings, newspaper and magazine articles, monographs and dissertations, photographs and interviews as well as the catalogued personal collections of dance figures at The New York Public Library Jerome Robbins Dance Collection. I also used resources at the libraries of University of Roehampton, The

Juilliard School, Columbia University/Barnard College, and New York University.

The Research, its Contributions, Aims, and Objectives

This thesis seeks to contribute to the growing body of scholarship about Nietzsche and dance (see Jones, 2010, 2013; Stanger, 2010; Randel, 2014; Lyle, 2017; Svobdny, 2018). It seeks to validate the importance of Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian formulations for modern dance and neoclassical ballet aesthetics in a specific era, 1900-1948. It was this half century in Europe and the United States in which Nietzsche's ideas, particularly among artists, had the greatest impact (Rosenthal, 1986; Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012; Caro, 2014).

The aim of the research is to make a nuanced argument for how Nietzsche's formulations, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, became instruments by which the six dance figures sought to articulate early modern dance and neoclassical ballet aesthetics. The first objective of the research is to demonstrate the ways in which these figures carried out their projects by employing the concepts and vocabulary of Nietzsche's formulations, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. For Nietzsche, Apollo cannot be defined without Dionysus. These gods, as with these dance figures' conceptions of neoclassical ballet and modern dance, can be construed as having an agonistic relationship. The second objective of the research is to illuminate the two dance genres' agonistic discourses, as carried out by these six dance figures, around the subject of gender. Arguably, the three modern dance

figures' privileging of the Dionysian led them to a re-evaluation of gender roles and identities as originally suggested by Nietzsche. Likewise, the three male ballet figures' privileging of the Apollonian was at times associated with a patriarchal and a heteronormative ethos.

Methodological Approaches

The methodology for this thesis is based on the influential approach formulated by the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920). In his conceptualisations of the 'ideal type' (1904, 1949), Weber wrote that the 'the basic idea of modern epistemology, which goes back to Kant, is that concepts are, and can only be, theoretical means for the purpose of intellectual mastery of the empirically given' (Weber, 2012: 134–135). The chosen six dance figures in this study represent the empirical material, that is, Weber's 'empirically given'. Their personal utterances, as well as their works of art and key life events, in relation to social and historical developments, are understood on the basis of ideal types, reconstructed on the basis of their own self-understanding. The Apollonian and Dionysian are thus employed as hermeneutic categories for the study of artistic movements in history. This combined approach or 'interpretive method' (*verstehende Methode*), in which the empirical is understood in respect to concepts and theoretical formulations, is the point of departure for this project's epistemology.

In Weber's 1915 essay 'Intermediate Reflections' (*Zwischenbetrachtung*), he

discussed modern rationality, religious and artistic experiences, and the paradoxical fact that only a culture that rationalises all spheres of social life could formulate an 'irrational' area of subjective experience as a legitimate cultural sphere in its own right. Since Volynsky, Duncan, Wigman, Schlemmer, Kirstein and Martin perceived their dance as a contribution, reflection, and a criticism in support or against contemporary developments—and they did so in eras of perceived cultural and political turmoil—Weber's ideas on the rational (order) and the irrational (freedom from order) are highly relevant. Interestingly, Weber was discussing the idea of an aesthetic of the rational, and the irrational, in response to modernisation at the same time that Duncan, Volynsky, Schlemmer and Wigman were consolidating their aesthetic approaches. Moreover, all seven writers, that is, Weber and the aforementioned dance figures, developed a critical analysis of modern culture based on the opposition or embrace of rationality/logos (Apollo) and the irrational/expressive (Dionysus) through their reading of Nietzsche.

Structure and Scope of the Thesis

This dissertation examines how Nietzsche's binary terms for the aforesaid dance figures expressed a prism of ideas about modern dance and neoclassical ballet that were the offspring of Nietzschean thinking. The scope of the thesis spans three, thematically-interlocking investigations in which dance is the binding subject.

The first investigation, chapter 1, focusses on how Nietzsche came to articulate the

Apollonian and the Dionysian in his first book, *BOT* (1872). In 1870, Nietzsche gave two important public lectures, 'Greek Music Drama' and 'Socrates and Tragedy', in which he examined the development of the Ancient Greek tragic chorus from its origins as a religious procession—with its citizens singing and dancing (Seidensticker, 2005: 38)—to its high-water mark as counterpointing the behaviours of the hero. What was profound about Nietzsche's early lectures was that he intimated how the irrational, chaotic and spontaneous impulses in early classical Greek tragedies, which were partially expressed through dance, were crucial. He did so by openly criticising the fact of Socrates' influence on the Ancient Greeks. Socrates privileged the rational, restrained and orderly, as Nietzsche found to be the case among his German contemporaries. Nietzsche then argued in *BOT* that both impulses, which he defined as the Dionysian and Apollonian, are central to the creation of an integrated and successful cultural and civic life. To underscore the strength of Nietzsche's early claims, recent scholarship about the cultural and ritual significance of tragic drama is included in this section. Also included are signposts to the aforementioned six dance figures who, following Nietzsche, expressed either how early modern dance or neoclassical ballet could act upon the public in a manner akin to the impact that Ancient Greek tragedy had on the self-understanding and cultural dynamism of the polis.

The second part of the investigation, chapter 2, broadens the subject of Nietzsche and dance by considering how scholars from three disciplines—philosophy, gender

studies and dance studies—characterised the significance of dance in Nietzsche's *BOT* (1872)*, The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885), *The Genealogy of Morality* (1887), and *Ecce Homo* (1888). Those discussed in this thesis who are dedicated to the understanding of philosophy and who are Nietzsche experts are Walter Kaufmann (1974, 1995), Lee Spinks (2004), and Alain Badiou (in Clark, 2011; Bartlett and Clemens, 2014; Botha, 2013). Those associated with gender studies and who have examined Nietzsche in depth are Hinton R. Thomas (1988), Luce Irigaray (1998) and Francis Oppel (2005). Those who are associated with dance studies and who have shown a significant interest in Nietzsche are Ernestine Stodelle (1978) Sondra Fraleigh (1987), Ramsay Burt (1990), Melissa Ragona (1994), Kimerer LaMothe (2003, 2005, 2006), Sue Jones (2010, 2013) and Arabella Stanger (2010).

Chapter 2 is prefaced, in section 2.1, with a brief discussion of how this study's key dance figures will be analysed in relationship to their aesthetic formation, in ballet and modern dance, and how these formations acted upon their respective privileging of Nietzsche's Apollonian or Dionysian formulations, which have been built upon gender identities (section 2.2). Correspondingly, sections 2.3 to 2.5 are structured to show how scholarly readings of Nietzsche's writings on dance have been shaped by specific disciplinary concerns in different fields of study. As with the dance figures' appropriation of Nietzsche, it could be said that scholarly readings of Nietzsche in relation to dance resemble a touchstone, which puts into

relief some disciplinary assumptions, goals and concerns.

The notion of an author's imbrication with a text will serve as the basis for the third and final investigation in chapters 3 to 5. It focusses on the six dance figures, whose artistic works and writings about modern dance and/or neoclassical ballet, between 1900 and 1948, were articulated through Dionysian and Apollonian terminology and aesthetics. Chapter 3 is devoted to tracing the polemical uses made by two contemporaries: Duncan and Volynsky. It will be shown how Nietzsche's binary terms provided them with an inspirational discourse to not only articulate their respective dance genres but also to shape their artistic identities. As will be underscored, Duncan's and Volynsky's appropriation of Nietzsche's central theory in *BOT* was not holistic but piecemeal, as they elevated one term to the negligence, or debasement, of the other. Though scholars have noted how Dionysian values had a profound impact on the movement philosophy of Duncan (Daly, 2002; LaMothe, 2006; Ragona, 1994) and how Apollonian values impacted Volynsky's aesthetic (Rabinowitz, 2008; Tolstoy, 2014, 2017), there has never been a comparative analysis of Duncan and Volynsky's strong tendency to uphold one value over the other, and a theorisation of why they did so.

Chapter 4 will be dedicated to Schlemmer and Wigman. What they perceived as metaphysical and transformative art will be the focus of discussion. For Wigman, it was art permeated with Dionysian chaos and channelled through heightened emotional states; for Schlemmer, it was a realisation through Apollonian order: the

square, circle, and the triangle—nature's shapes abstracted by man as inspired by Kandinsky ([1912] 1966). For Wigman, what seemed to matter was how art fostered itself through upheaval; for Schlemmer, the finished form, impenetrable in its perfection, seemed to be the ideal. Though scholars have noted how Dionysian values had a profound impact on the movement philosophy of Wigman (Sorell and Wigman, 1966; Odom, 1980; Ragona, 1994; Manning, 2006; Jones, 2010, 2013; Kolb, 2016) and how Apollonian values impacted Schlemmer's aesthetic (Scheyer, 1970; Trimmingham, 2012), there has never been a comparative analysis of Wigman's and Schlemmer's strong tendency to uphold one value over the other, and a theorisation of why they did so.

Chapter 5 focusses on Kirstein and Martin who, respectively, developed a Nietzschean dance language and quasi philosophies about neoclassical ballet and modern dance. Unlike the figures analysed in chapters 3 and 4, Kirstein and Martin did not overtly ascribe their dance language to the German philosopher, who in the years leading up to World War II was being associated with fascism (Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012: 219). Consequently, Martin's Nietzsche-isms took a detour, stemming from the Dionysian-infused dance writings of Duncan, Wigman and Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938). Likewise, Kirstein's Nietzschean aesthetics echoed Schlemmer's and Volynsky's Apollonian orientations, but also appeared directly related to André Levinson's (1887-1933) and T.S. Eliot's (1888-1965), both of whom, as will be discussed in chapters 3 and 5, absorbed Nietzsche.

Kirstein and Martin literally boxed with each other in print (Barrett, 1964; Manning, 2006; Duberman, 2007). Their 1930s and 40s diatribes for and against modern dance and ballet took place amidst debates about American capitalism, Russian-Soviet communism and finally German fascism. These larger cultural debates involved questions about the kind of dance that would best serve as a moving symbol of American nationhood. As with the scope of chapters 3 and 4, chapter five's comparative analysis of Kirstein and Martin's strong tendency to uphold one of Nietzsche's binary terms over the other, and theorisations of why they did so, can be perceived as original research.

Chapter 6, the conclusion of the work, will consider why Nietzsche's terms seem, since the latter part of the twentieth century, to have lost their significance for dance makers and writers seeking to understand and define their aesthetic orientations. In order to illustrate this final hypothesis regarding the fading of the Apollonian-Dionysian conceptual opposition, some recent developments in the field of theatrical dance will be briefly sketched, below, and then more fully considered in the concluding chapter. Following the deaths, between 1958 and 2009, of modern dance choreographers Humphrey, Limón, Graham, and Merce Cunningham (1919-2009), there have been far fewer choreographers creating a training technique to serve their aesthetics. In this respect, the Gaga technique of Ohad Naharin (b. 1952) and the Taylor technique of choreographer Paul Taylor (1930-2018) are now the exceptions rather than the rule. Modern dance

choreographer Mark Morris (b. 1956) exemplifies this new trend. He uses ballet as his company's foundational technique rather than creating his own. The second reason that Nietzsche's terms may no longer be as potent is that ballet companies are increasingly hiring modern dance choreographers (Anderson, 2016; Cooper, 2018) and dancers are seeking out floor-based and improvisational techniques (Brandt, 2012; Larsen, 2016). This openness to modern dance gained significant traction in the United States with the choreographer Twyla Tharp, who was hired by The Joffrey Ballet in 1973 and who went on to create a significant body of work at American Ballet Theatre (Caldwell, 2017). The third reason is potentially the most interesting in respect to this thesis. The term modern dance is being effaced by those whose training stemmed primarily from this genre. For example, the former Martha Graham principal dancer Jacqulyn Buglisi, who founded the Buglisi Dance Theatre more than two decades ago, does not refer to modern dance in her company's 'about' page of her website; Jessica Lang, who danced with Tharp and who founded her company in 2011, which is closing in 2019, noted that neither modern dance nor ballet explains her aesthetic (Buglisi, 2015; Straus, 2012, cited in Keefe, 2018). The term 'contemporary dance' is also being used by male ballet choreographers, such as Christopher Wheeldon, Mathew Neenan and Benjamin (Mackrell, 2017; Greskovic, 2018; Hodgins, 2012). At the same time, the concept of gender, of which Nietzsche intimated as being a semantic construction in *BOT*, is undergoing a re-evaluation in the power politics of concert dance. Male ballet dancers and female choreographers have recently become more vocal and active about criticising conventionally determined gender roles that, respectively, have

shaped their behaviour on stage and their professional capacities in artistic leadership roles. For example, male ballet dancers, such as the American Ballet Theatre principal James Whiteside, are publicly performing in drag (Schaefer, 2016). English National Ballet dancer Chase Johnsey has been hired to dance female corps de ballet roles (Sulcas, 2018). Female choreographers in the wake of the #MeToo movement are being commissioned to make works for major companies, and entire evenings on mixed bill programmes are most recently, only, featuring female choreographers (Kourlas, 2016; Sulcas, 2018). Lastly, the term contemporary dance seems to capture a more complex hybridisation of dancers' experiences. Dance's global reach, its diffusion through social media platforms, and its choreographers, who rather than forming full-time companies are now making their livings as globe-trotting artists, are impacting the way dancers choose to train and perform. Whether initially shaped by ballet or modern dance training, dancers are increasingly seeking out other equally important dance forms, from Juba to hip hop, from Capoeira to Kuchipudi. The Dionysian and the Apollonian, though electrifyingly influential formulations one hundred years ago, no longer seem to capture the aesthetics of today's dancescape. They were, nonetheless, crucial concepts for key, early and mid- twentieth-century modern dance and ballet figures.

Chapter 1

Nietzsche's Analysis of Greek Tragedy

[...] art is the highest task and the true metaphysical activity of this life.

---Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*

Schema of chapter 1

The first section of chapter 1 provides an overview of Nietzsche's early philosophy in which he critiqued Western rationalism in relation to Ancient Greek tragedy. Nietzsche surmised that tragedy's power lies in its integration of the irrational and the rational, and that these dual forces, as articulated in the arts, are central to an integrated and successful cultural and civic life. Nietzsche anticipated Freud's theory that artistic works were linked to unconscious forces and dreams, but also given form through conscious deliberations. 'There is a path that leads back from phantasy to reality', Freud wrote, 'the path, that is, of art' (Freud, 1996: 467). Nietzsche's notion of the 'irrational' is echoed in Freud's idea of the artistic 'unconscious', even though these terms are deployed in different ways.

The second section of this chapter considers two important public lectures Nietzsche gave at the University of Basel in 1870 that prepared him to write his first book, *BOT*. In these lectures, Nietzsche was already examining the early developments of the tragic chorus as an art form that he considered to be crucial for the life of the polis in Ancient Greece. Recent scholarship about the cultural and ritual significance of tragic drama is included in this section in order to underscore the content of Nietzsche's claims. Also included in this chapter are signposts to the aforementioned dance figures who, following Nietzsche, argued that concert dance could act upon the public in a manner akin to the impact that Ancient Greek tragedy had on the self-understanding and cultural dynamism of the polis.

1.1 Nietzsche, Modernity and the Arts in Crisis

Nietzsche's philosophical contributions to modern thought offered a radical approach to the evaluation and esteem for the arts. Nietzsche became the first Western philosopher to declare that the arts had no less a claim than philosophy or science to the knowledge and understanding of the world (Danto, 2005: 19). Following Nietzsche, and at a distance of a century, the seminal art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto (1986) argued that Western thinkers since Socrates and Plato have considered the arts to be a derivative cultural practice, not to be ranked as highly as science, politics or philosophy. Danto underscored that, almost from the beginnings of the discipline of philosophy, philosophers have had a relatively hostile or disdainful attitude towards the arts as a human project. Philosophers, wrote Danto (1986: 5-6), declared 'a kind of warfare between philosophy and art'. Reason or logos, and thus philosophy itself, were seen as providing a much superior approach to understanding reality.

For Nietzsche, the arts were not only a source of knowledge and understanding of the world, but also had the capacity to transform human reality (Kemal, Gaskell & Conway, 1998). 'More so than any other philosopher before him', Nietzsche 'understands art as the basic transformative impulse known to human experience' (Kemal et al., 1998: 2). Nietzsche proposed 'art itself as the unacknowledged catalyst of social change, growth, and transfiguration' (Kemal et al., 1998: 3). Nietzsche's radical reassessment of the arts, especially in their relationship to

science and philosophy, made a significant contribution to the history of thought. Nietzsche doubted the superiority of reason; he proposed the practice of the arts to be at least an equal source of self-understanding and renewal for social and cultural life; he advocated an end to the dominance of a scientific, calculating rationality in Western civilization. He introduced a new way to practice philosophy, which drew its fundamental orientation from artistic practice. The philosophers Alexander Nehamas (1985) and Martin Puchner (2010) underlined this artistic orientation of Nietzsche's philosophical method, which the latter described as 'the creation of a philosophy that variously integrates art into its own procedures, conceiving of philosophy itself as artistic' (Puchner, 2010: 138). The psychologist and philosophy historian Elliot Jurist concisely stated that 'Nietzsche attempts to remake philosophy in the image of art' (Jurist, 2000: 3).

In keeping with the way academic philosophers understood the strong impact of Nietzsche's ideas on the theory and practice of the arts, both during and after his lifetime (Kemal et al. 1998; Witt, 2007), dance scholars Ramsay Burt (1990) and Helen Thomas (1995: 70, 98) focussed specifically on how Nietzsche's ideas shaped twentieth-century ideas about the dancing body. According to Burt (1990: 24), Nietzsche's impact on dance can be partially explained by the fact that from the beginning of his career, the philosopher considered the importance of the body in culture. The philosopher Horst Hutter argued that 'What is entirely novel with Nietzsche, however, is his use of the symbol of dance as a symbol of supreme philosophical significance' (Hutter 2006, 180). Nietzsche criticised the idea of a

body-mind separation, a divide that Western rationalism introduced together with the assumption of the superiority of reason and intellect over physicality and emotion (Burt, 1990: 25-26). Burt made clear that Nietzsche supported an equal status for emotions and the body as sources of legitimate knowledge. Since dance is the art form where the body is most immediate and present, Nietzsche considered dance 'as the highest—most sophisticated and harmonious—form of human activity. For him all our higher actions aspired to the condition of dancing' (Burt, 1990: 24). Dance, for Nietzsche, as asserted Hutter (2006, 7), was the means to bridge the divided modern self.

In 1872, at the time of Nietzsche's publication of *BOT*, academic and public life in Germany were still dominated by the Enlightenment's rational optimism and its continuation through the nineteenth-century idea or, rather, ideology of human progress (Gay, 1969: 56). Against the prevailing, and often aggressive assurance attached to notions of modern scientific civilisation, Nietzsche developed a distinctively sceptical approach. Nietzsche's early predecessor in this criticism of Western rationality, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, had already expressed in his *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* (1750) doubts and concerns about a society guided by scientific thought and refined taste (Rousseau, 1970: 10). Given Rousseau's pioneering influence on the Romantic movement, as described by literary critics David Bromwich (2002: 296) and Nancy Yousef (1999), a certain distrust of scientific rationality became a fundamental attitude among Romantic artists and

philosophers (see also Sherrat, 2006: 57).[2] However, the Romantic movement, as well as its successor movement Weimar Classicism, still based their aesthetics to a considerable extent, as well as their vision of culture and society, on the idealisation of Ancient Greece.[3] The well-established concept of 'Romantic Hellenism', as discussed by literary scholar Timothy Webb (1993), shows how the idealisation of Ancient Greece was fused with the values of the Romantic movement. Romantic poets, such as Percy Bysshe Shelley, saw Ancient Greece as the basis and point of departure 'of much that was best in Western civilization' (Webb, 1993: 154). Joining these perspectives developed by Nietzsche and by writers of the Romantic movement, both Isadora Duncan, pioneer of modern dance, and her contemporary Akim Volynsky, the influential Russian ballet critic, identified Ancient Greece as the origins of early modern dance and post-Imperial Russian ballet, respectively. They developed for this purpose a theoretical and practical vision of their dance genres' connections to Ancient Greece. Evidence of the actual dance steps from the fifth century BCE were extremely fragmentary, so they imagined and constructed, under the inspiration of Nietzsche and other sources, a series of ideas about the choreography of the tragic chorus, Greek mythology's ritual and social importance

[2] It should be noted that several historians of philosophy have opposed Nietzsche's and Rousseau's ideas of morality, even as they investigated their importance for aesthetics. For example, see Keith Ansell-Pearson (1996).

[3] The term Weimar Classicism stemmed from the work of Goethe and Schiller at Weimar, and it had considerable influence on Nietzsche. According to the German literature scholar Gerhart Hoffmeister, Goethe understood classicism 'as a bastion of high moral and aesthetic standards modelled on the ancients and upheld in the face of the corroding trends of Romanticism' (Hoffmeister, 2002: 233).

to dance, and its connection to ideas of the sacred, that is to say to the Olympian gods, and also to the Titans. Duncan and Volynsky are discussed specifically in chapter 3.

The idea of the Greek gods as designations for aesthetic orientations, or more generally for cultural norms and values, had been well known since the Renaissance, and it was a highly influential concept in the Weimar Classical period of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) and Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), who had a major impact on Nietzsche (Bishop and Stephenson, 1999). Significantly, the idea that the life of the arts in Ancient Greece was driven by a conflict of aesthetic values, a conflict inspired by opposing gods, had been specifically put forward by both Friedrich Schiller and the poet Friedrich Hölderlin (Silk and Stern, 1981: 211). However, Nietzsche gave to the antagonism of the gods Apollo and Dionysus a new clarity and intensity by constructing on its basis not only a reformulation of aesthetics, but also a radical criticism of Western culture as being too Apollonian and rationalised. Rallying to Nietzsche's argument that Western culture was detrimentally drawn to logic, as an imagined safeguard against the unknown, early twentieth-century modern dance artists promulgated the idea of an impulsive and ecstatic artistic practice that mediated and critiqued a logocentric world. In contrast, ballet apologists Akim Volynsky, André Levinson and Lincoln Kirstein often stated that ballet was an ideal art because of its order and restraint, its civilizing effect. Moreover, they argued that ballet's logical progression—in which simple steps become the building blocks for more complex

ones—provided choreographers with a rational lexicon. And they affirmed that ballet's grammar of steps pointed to ballet's aesthetic and formalist superiority to modern dance aesthetics, described as originating in ecstatic experience, and a highly individualised forms of physical expression (Kolb, 2009: 139-140; Fraleigh, 1987:xxxiv).

1.2 Nietzsche and Dance in the Greek Tragedy

Nietzsche first articulated his ideas about tragedy, dance and the renovation of the arts in two well-attended public lectures he gave at the Great Hall of the Museum of the University of Basel (Krell & Bates, 1997: 81). His first lecture, 'The Greek Music Drama', took place on 18 January 1870, and his second lecture, 'Socrates and Tragedy', took place less than two weeks later (Nietzsche, [1870] 2013; [1870] 1995). In 'The Greek Music Drama', Nietzsche developed his ideas about tragedy from Aristotle's *Poetics* in which the Greek philosopher posited that tragedy's birth was a relatively spontaneous development that arose out of the dancing cult of Dionysus (Aristotle, 1999: 10-20 [1449a]). However, Nietzsche opposed Aristotle's idea that this development was rather improvised or spontaneous. Instead Nietzsche emphasised how the separation of the actor from the chorus developed consciously, as explored below. Re-evaluating Aristotle's contention, Nietzsche reread *Poetics* while paying attention to the ideas about the subject of the birth of tragedy put forth by the celebrated mid-nineteenth century Ancient Greek historian and archaeologist Karl Otfried Müller (Müller, 1840: 289). Müller was the

first to provide extensive, systematic archaeological and philological evidence to support Aristotle's rather bare statement about the connection between the dancing cult of Dionysus and tragedy, upon which Nietzsche's thoughts were based (Safranski, 2002: 60).

Before Nietzsche's first lecture is discussed, it is worth outlining the philological evidence in the Ancient Greek tragic chorus where the word 'dance' figures extensively. Aristotle used *orchestikos* in the *Poetics* as signifying 'better for dancing' (Aristotle, 1999: 20-25 [1449a]). The word derives from the verb *orkheisthai*, meaning 'to dance' in Ancient Greek. For the reader of Aristotle in Ancient Greek, a clear connection would therefore be made between dancing and the place where the tragic chorus performed, the *orkhestra* (with suffix *-tra* denoting place).[4] Moreover, as the classicists Ian C. Storey and Arlene Allan (2005: 91) posited, Aristotle stated in *Poetics* that the tetrameter was the type of measure used in early tragedies because it was better for dancing (Aristotle, 1999: 25 [1449a). The prominence of dance in Ancient Greek tragedy was also expressed through the word applied to the wealthy citizen who produced The Great Dionysia out of a sense of public duty or with the hope of receiving public acclaim. This

[4] The Greek word orkheisthai was employed into the eighteenth century. For example, in 1589 Thoinot Arbeau titled his dancing manual Orchésographie; in 1700, Raoul-Auger Feuillet titled his Orchesography; or, The Art of Dancing by Characters and Demonstrative Figures. However, the employment of Greek words, in general, fell out of favour with the creation of nation states (Georgakopoulou, 2007: 277). Languages connected to those nations increasingly replaced Greek and Latin, which subsequently ceased to become the vehicle for scholarly communication.

wealthy citizen was called the *choregos*, which translates as the 'leader of the dance' (Meineck, 2013: 359; Storey and Allan, 2005: 19). Today, however, the common English meaning for the word chorus refers to a group of singers. Yet in Ancient Greek the term *khorus* has several connected meanings, all of them referring strictly to dance. *Khorus* can mean dancers, the place where they dance, or a specific piece that was danced.

In 'The Greek Music Drama', Nietzsche went further than Aristotle and Müller in their discussions of the origins of Greek tragedy: he stated that the dithyramb, a performed dance and song in honour of the god Dionysus (Vince, 2010), not only led to tragedy's birth, it was also the departure point for understanding tragedy as a whole. To introduce his argument, Nietzsche referenced The Great Dionysia festivals in Ancient Athens, where extant tragedies—that is to say, those available today—were performed. Nietzsche perceived the function of The Great Dionysia choruses, in the opening dithyramb ceremony and in the tragic plays, as more than a performance. He claimed that the dithyramb singing and dancing, which was reconstituted in the tragic chorus, gave tragedy its character and structure as a public ceremony in that it reflected the workings of the polis. For Nietzsche, the dancing-singing tragic chorus served as the guarantee for public transparency of the action. Nietzsche stated,

> the ancient chorus demanded that the entire action in each drama take place in public, so that the open square was the place of action for the tragedy. This is an audacious demand […] Everything made public, everything in daylight, everything in the presence of the chorus—this was the cruel demand.

(Nietzsche, 2013: 2)

Not only did the chorus enact public transparency, Nietzsche argued, it also enacted an ancient religious ritual—more than a mere artistic performance—at The Great Dionysia festival and on a massive scale: One-thousand participants or performers participated from late March through early April. The Great Dionysia opened its ceremony with twenty, all-male dithyrambic choruses that sang and danced in circular patterns; in the centre of each choreographic composition, one performer played the *aulos* (Seidensticker, 2005: 38). This huge presentation of dithyrambs stemmed from and was organized to reflect the ten tribes who comprised the polis and were charged with the military organization of Athens and its territories in Attica. Apart from the ten tribes' military role, they also had a civic and political function: they were the voting constituencies for the election of magistrates (Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003: 69). Thus, their performance was not only understood as a form of religious worship, but also as a form of political participation. As mentioned above, the song and dance of the choruses were more than a mere artistic performance, they were an ancient religious, civic and military ritual.

Contemporary scholars have substantiated Nietzsche's argument that The Great Dionysia dithyramb procession was a religious ritual, instead of just a spectacle preceding the festival's tragedies and comedies. The classical scholar Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood (2003: 15), for example, explained that the Ancient Greek noun *tragoedia* originates from *tragodos*, a word referring to a member of the chorus

who sang and danced at the sacrifice of a goat (*tragos*) in honour of Dionysus. Thus dance, given its etymological derivation, expresses foremost ritual. This idea began to gain currency with the religion scholar William Oscar Emil Oesterley's 1923 publication, *The Sacred Dance. A Study in Comparative Folklore*, a classic work on dance in folkloric traditions. Oesterley theorised that 'all dancing was originally religious, and was performed for religious purposes' (Oesterley, 1923: 21). Yet his point of view was highly controversial. Many anthropologists of Oesterley's day believed that the origin of dance, as dance anthropologist Drid Williams (2004: 87-94) explained, was not religious at all; instead, found Williams, early twentieth-century anthropologists perceived dance as a practice stemming from the wish to imitate animals. Following Oesterley, however, Williams (2004: 87-94) produced even more ample evidence linking dance to religious practice. Furthermore, Williams theorised that with the advent of Christianity a determined exclusion of dance as a religious expression was undertaken. Williams pointed out that the there was an outright '*demonization*' of dance, since for some Christian traditions '*witches were defined as the people who dance*' (Williams, 2004: 95, italics, author's). In chapter 4, Wigman's *Witch Dance* will be discussed as a dialogue between Christian culture, which often perceived dancing as witchery, and a pagan Dionysian culture, in which dancing symbolised ecstatic prayer. This comparative argument is indebted to the work on Wigman by Susan Manning (2006 [1993]).

The strong connection between dance and religion in Ancient Greek society posited by Nietzsche in 'The Greek Music Drama' has not only been affirmed by Drid

Williams but also by other scholars. For example, the Greek mythology scholar Walter Burkert, in his well-known study of Ancient Greek religion, remarked upon the fact that the word *choros* refers to both the 'group of dancers and the place for dancing' (Burkert, 1985: 102). Furthermore, continued Burkert, the religious ceremony of The Great Dionysia festival is equivalent to the act of dancing and singing, since to 'celebrate a festival is to set up choruses' (Burkert, 1985: 102). He concluded his observations with the following about the Ancient Greek religion: 'the experience of the dance merges with the experience of the deity' (Burkert, 1985: 103). More recently the classics scholar Steven Lonsdale, in his study of dance in Greek religion, went further than Burkert by writing that the experience of the deity in dance suggests a certain power: 'the power of the dance to attract a celestial presence to a dancing ground' (Lonsdale, 2000: 116). Nietzsche's ideas about tragedy, including the chorus's central place in its origins, experienced its wave of popularity in Russia, Europe and the United States in the early twentieth century, following the publication of his first book. It is not surprising that there

occurred a simultaneous vogue for choreographing *à la Grecque* (For further discussion, see Rosenthal, 1986; Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012; chapter 3). Nietzsche's writing about the centrality of dancing helped fuel this trend.

The participants in the Ancient Greek chorus who performed religious rituals through dancing and singing were perceived as being like priests (Price, 1999: 69). In non-Western dance cultures, the notion of dancers being both spiritual guides and citizens never lost currency. However, Western theatrical dance originated inside the culture of the court (Needham, 1997), and its subsequent professionalization initially occurred through the training of serfs in Russia (Homans, 2010: 251) and the working classes in Paris (Coons, 2014: 140-164). Therefore, dancers were not so clearly identified as ritual figures of authority in Western theatrical dance, as had been the case in Ancient Greece. With Nietzsche's argument that dancing was a religious act in Ancient Greece, he influenced the thinking of modern dance pioneers, such as Duncan and Wigman as well as Volynsky and Schlemmer. All read Nietzsche and projected themselves as high priestesses and priests of dance. (For further consideration of modern dance and neoclassical ballet in these terms, see chapters 3 to 6).

Since Nietzsche's focus in 'The Greek Music Drama' concerned the birth and development of Ancient Greek tragedy out of the dancing dithyramb, it is unlikely that the vital roles played by women in this development escaped his notice.

According to the British classicist Edith Hall (1997: 105), the choruses of the tragedies were not even, in the majority, male. For example, the chorus of Euripides' *Medea* is formed entirely of women, and they are crucial to the action: they help Medea carry out her project of terrible revenge on her unfaithful husband Jason. Also common to The Great Dionysia's stage was the presentation in tragedies of significant female roles. Writing during the second century BCE, the poet Lucian observed that there were more women than men performing in these plays (Hall, 1997: 105). Indeed, only one of the surviving Greek tragedies, Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, was entirely composed of a male chorus and characters. The proportion of female choruses in the rest of the surviving tragedies was high relative to male choruses: twenty-one to ten respectively (Foley, 2001: 6). It is plausible that the presence in Ancient Greek tragedies of strong female heroines, and female choruses, influenced Nietzsche's formulation of the Dionysian (as will be discussed later in this chapter and in chapter 2). It is also arguable that the importance of female roles in Ancient Greek tragedies in combination with Nietzsche's formulation of the Dionysian inspired the choreographies of Duncan, Wigman, and Graham (see chapters 3 to 5).

Part of Nietzsche's impact in 'The Greek Music Drama' was that he refuted the notion that the chorus was simply a group of bystanders or witnesses, reacting and commenting (Nietzsche 2013, 16). Instead, he theorised they assumed significance as a religious and public body politic through song and dance. Moreover, because Nietzsche was one of, if not the first, of the modern writers to point out the ritual

significance of Greek tragic chorus, it is worth reconstructing his theory through the examination of some of the most celebrated Ancient Greek tragedies in which dance figures. In Sophocles' *Antigone* antistrophe 2, for example, the chorus is described as entering the scene singing and dancing in a procession that forms part of a paean to victory in war. The chorus, as a singing and dancing body, is at this moment giving thanks for the salvation of the polis. The audience would have recognized at the time of *Antigone*'s first performance in 441 BCE how the chorus's paean to war's victory related directly to Athens' increasingly tense and warlike confrontation with Sparta (the devastating Peloponnesian war was to begin ten years later). Thus, a chorus's singing, dancing and invoking of the gods' protection was perceived by the public as a religious ritual that Sourvinou-Inwood (2005: 16) describes as a ritual 'in the here and now'. As Nietzsche argued, in his first lecture, the chorus's behaviour was not merely a visual interlude, like a divertissement in a narrative ballet, but a religious ritual connected to social and political realities.

Another important example of the Ancient Greek dancing chorus performing the function of those who pray to the gods, for the safety of the city, occurs in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*. In the play's most crucial and dramatic moment, Thebes's chorus of elders discusses and examines the possibility that Oedipus has committed the horrendous crimes of patricide and incest. Then the chorus asks, in verses 878-896, 'why should I dance my dance?' (Sophocles, 2004). With this

question, these people are considering two connected issues: Firstly, whether Tiresias, a messenger of the gods, is lying about Oedipus' crimes, which are now causing the city's plague. And secondly, they are speculating that if Tiresias is lying for the gods, then why should they, the chorus, honour them through dance? In this passage, the dancing chorus in *Oedipus Rex* is not only given the opportunity to question the gods (through Tiresias), they also bear witness to how the gods mete out justice (Oedipus blinds himself and Jocasta commits suicide). In the denouement, the dancing chorus's questioning of whether the gods are honest is confirmed. Their dancing in honour of the gods has import: The chorus understands that they are being heard by the gods in that justice is carried out. Given this significant passage, it can be said in contemporary terms that dance appeared to be the Ancient Greeks' way of communicating with the gods. They did not pray to or beseech the gods by ritually pronouncing or 'thinking' words, as in the case of Christian religious practices in later centuries, but they prayed to and beseeched the gods by dancing.

In 'The Greek Music Drama', Nietzsche underscored that the great tragedies of the Greek classical period embodied the combined achievements of instrumental music, song, dance, poetry, (stage) painting, (stage) architecture, and drama. For Nietzsche, the tragedy was not only an achievement constituted by the involvement of all the arts, it also, and perhaps more significantly, expressed and recreated a social ritual—a vision of the world common to Greek culture. Nietzsche

took this idea further in *BOT* by arguing that the tragedy articulated a philosophy of life. Nietzsche's argument relates to material to be discussed in chapters 3 to 5, in respect to how the six ballet and modern dance figures perceived their chosen dance genre as also practising a philosophy of life that was honed and performed through a movement ritual, determined by its aesthetic specificity. Yet what comprised the ritual movement was characterised differently for these modern dance artists and ballet artists. Volynsky, Schlemmer and Kirstein perceived that it was through the practice, preservation and/or reinterpretation of a historically codified vocabulary (*la danse d'école*). The historically codified vocabulary of ballet results in a schooled dancing 'that follows time-honoured and strict rules for executing specific poses and steps' (Lee, 2002: 78). As a dance technique, ballet has been built around very precise and systematic physical directives, whose procedures were originally framed by the *Académie Royale de Musique*, founded in 1661 (Lee, 2002: 77). In contrast, Duncan, Wigman and Martin argued that modern dance's philosophy was expressed through a direct and expressive physicalisation of emotions and symbolic ideas, as created by a strong, individual vision. Since the early twentieth century, modern dancers have shaped an expressive dancing that is less constrained, that is to say, not strictly based on a system or codification of exact rules (Jowitt, 1988).

Nietzsche's analysis in 'The Greek Music Drama' of the religious and political significances of dancing in tragedy did not correspond to the writings of his peers (Nietzsche, 2013: 26). For instance, the influential theatre critic, literature scholar

and philosopher George Henry Lewes, who was well known in Germany since the publication of his *Life of Goethe* in 1855, advanced the thesis that only during the opening ceremony did the choruses of the Great Dionysia dance, and that their dancing had been abandoned in tragedies (Lewes, 1845). Lewes believed that the continual mention of dance in the texts of extant tragedies were mere allusions; that is to say, even when the chorus clearly stated that they were dancing, they were using the term metaphorically; they were not actually dancing on stage (Lewes, 1845: 346-7). Lewes's point of view reflected a widespread attitude among mid-nineteenth century scholars and critics about the Greek chorus.

At the time when Nietzsche and Lewes were writing about the significance, or lack of significance, of dancing in The Great Dionysia festival, the concept of dance as an art form was not particularly high. As classicist scholar Fiona Macintosh (2013) has argued, a strong disdain in Europe for dance was quite common in the mid-nineteenth century and beyond. According to Macintosh, 'the general prejudice directed towards the dancer in the Victorian period' was so powerful that 'the dancer and the prostitute occupied an equivalent social status' (Macintosh, 2013: 342).[5] Nietzsche's works, both his lecture 'The Greek Music Drama' and particularly his more widely available book *BOT*, contributed to the changing and elevating of the social and cultural status of the dancer towards the end of the nineteenth

[5] For further reading on female dancers' low social status, see Sally Banes (1998), Helen Thomas (1995) and Lynn Garafola (1997). For an alternative perspective, focussed on the perception of the ballet dancer in Edwardian and Victorian England, see Carter (2005).

century and the beginning of the twentieth century, in Europe and in the United States. This changed perception toward dance, as an art form, ostensibly gained ground in 1876, when the English philosopher and literature scholar Walter Pater published two important essays about religion and ritual in Ancient Greece. In the second of Pater's essays, titled 'Dionysus', the outsider-god is identified as one persecuted for his new religion of ecstasy and, who, subsequently becomes a combatant against reactionary forces (Macintosh, 2011: 46). Duncan and Pater are connected through Pater's influence on the Cambridge Ritualists,

> a name given to a group of three classicists, Jane Harrison (1850–1928), Gilbert Murray (1866–1957), and Francis Cornford (1874–1943), who worked together at the beginning of the twentieth century, applying the methods and findings of anthropology to the field of Ancient Greek religion. Like many of their contemporaries in the social sciences, they sought origins, which for religion meant primitive ritual.
>
> (Robinson, 2010)

In 1900, The Cambridge Ritualist Jane Harrison read a passage from one of Nietzsche's writings as accompaniment to Duncan's solo *Dance Idylls*, as will be discussed in chapter 3. Before Duncan's London salon performance, the dancer made pilgrimages to The British Museum, where she studied Greek statuary (Di-Donato, 2009: 22). By connecting her dance to the Cambridge Ritualists, Ancient Greek art and then Nietzsche, Duncan embarked on her highly-successful European career, which in turn helped fuel the fashion for all things Greek in England and on the Continent. As Macintosh notes, 'the early twentieth century, after two decades of dressing like a Greek in free-flowing dresses, [began] moving like one' (Macintosh, 2011: 48).

The controversy regarding dance's position in tragedy and the arts engaged Nietzsche in both of his lectures of 1870, 'The Greek Music Drama' and 'Socrates and Tragedy'. In the first lecture, he made several other comments regarding his disagreement with Aristotle's *Poetics* (1999, 10-11 [1149a]). Aristotle had argued that this transformation of one of the chorus members—who breaks off, leads the homogeneous chorus of the dithyramb, and subsequently becomes an actor (in tragedy)—was not intentional. It was in Aristotle's opinion, as mentioned above, a spontaneous improvisation. Thus, Aristotle saw the birth of the tragedy as an unplanned evolution from the group dancing and singing of the dithyramb. Aristotle's theory likely descended from his reading of a seventh-century poem by Archilochus, which survives only as a fragment, and represents the earliest reference to the dithyramb (See Scullion, 2005: 27). In the translation by Guy Davenport (1964: 83), the Archilochus fragment reads:

And I know how to lead off
The sprightly dance
Of the Lord Dionysus
the dithyramb.
I do it thunderstruck
With wine.

In contrast to Aristotle's contention of the spontaneous development of the tragic actor— through his reading of Archilochus's description of the emergence of a singular voice— Nietzsche put forward a very different idea, perhaps stimulated by the words 'thunderstruck' and 'wine'. For Nietzsche, as he stated in *BOT,* the separation of the individual from the rest of the chorus represented a conscious act of assertion against the collective, and this act added a crucial dimension of tension

and conflict in the origins of tragedy (Nietzsche, 1999: 44; Safranski, 2002: 62). This tension captured the tragedy's artistic strength. With 'The Greek Music Drama', and more emphatically in *BOT*, Nietzsche discussed the aesthetic significances of tension, turmoil and unease, thus unfolding the idea of Dionysian versus Apollonian forces. He identified these kinds of emotional states in his first book with the concept of dissonance,[6] and went on to define the artistic sources of Dionysian aesthetics. For Nietzsche, Dionysian aesthetics represented the tension between individual and the chorus.[7] He analogised, as will be discussed, this tension through his descriptions of the dissonance between the Dionysian and the Apollonian in *BOT*. The philosopher Rüdiger Safranski explains the way that, from the inception of the tragedy, the form allowed for dissonance to surge and wane on the Ancient Greek stage:

> some individuals asserted their individuality against the collective chorus [...] As is typical of dissonance, a dramatic tension ensued onstage. The protagonists detached themselves as a single voice from the chorus, developed their dissonant role, and were re-submerged into the unison of the chorus.
>
> (Safranski, 2002: 62)

[6] Consonance and dissonance are defined by the Harvard Dictionary of Music as a 'means of classifying the interval between two simultaneous notes. Very generally, consonant intervals are regarded as primary and stable, whereas dissonant intervals are regarded as secondary and unstable' (Randel, 2003: 209). The perception and classification of consonances and dissonances has changed substantially in the history of music, according to the development and variations of musical styles (Randel, 2003: 209-210).

[7] See the Greek scholar Babette Babich's essay (2016) for a thorough-going examination of 'The Greek Music Drama' in which the classics scholar discusses how Archilochus, the lyric subjective poet, becomes for Nietzsche the inspiration for his Dionysian formulation. Babich compares Archilochus to Homer, who narrates linearly and in the anonymous (god-like) third person. Homer, according to Babich, becomes the inspiration for Nietzsche's Apollonian formulation.

Nietzsche's theory that the chorus and its leader served as a performative consonance and dissonance, respectively, is born out through the descriptions by John Martin (see chapter 6) of the group sections in Balanchine's *Orpheus* (1948) and Graham's *Night Journey* (1947). While dance scholars, to my knowledge, have yet to consider the impact of Nietzsche's dissonance aesthetics on specific twentieth-century choreographies, it has had a profound impact on music scholarship. In a ground-breaking essay, the philosopher Theodor Adorno (2006: 36), for example, argued for important connections between Nietzsche and Arnold Schoenberg's innovative compositions in respect to their embrace of dissonance. This shared aesthetics, asserted Adorno and as discussed by Adorno scholar John Roberts, could be perceived through an analysis of Schoenberg's twelve-tone techniques expressed in

> ideals of transcendental expression, which in his hands took on a distinctly expressionistic cast, encouraging rejection of inherited conventions in search of a unique inner vision and private compositional language.
>
> (Roberts, 2006)

Adorno's writings on Nietzsche and Schoenberg were influential for the musicologist William Benjamin (2000), who detailed how Schoenberg's belief—that consonance required dissonance—was directly inspired by the Dionysian-Apollonian conflict conceived by Nietzsche. Benjamin's text closely matched Schoenberg's concepts and terminology vis-à-vis Nietzsche's writings in *BOT*.[8] The philosopher Daniel Melnick stated, in more general terms, that because of

[8] While considering his artistic development, Schoenberg wrote in 1921 how 'Later I discovered that our sense of form was right when it forced us to counterbalance extreme emotionality with extraordinary shortness' (Schoenberg, 1975: 217).

Nietzsche's seminal ideas about dissonance, he represented the 'conclusive nineteenth-century figure' for the study of music and its ties to modernism (Melnick, 1994: 44). In contrast to Nietzsche's ties to music, his connections to twentieth-century concert dance are not conclusive among scholars. There is, however, a growing body of literature dedicated to the study of Nietzsche, dance and modernism, to which this dissertation attempts to contribute (See, for example, Kew, 2007; Manning, 2003; Stanger, 2010; Jones, 2010, 2013).

1.3 Nietzsche's Criticism of Socrates

In Nietzsche's second 1870 public lecture 'Socrates and Tragedy', he argued that Socrates's emphasis on reason and his antipathy to the arts were disruptive of the balance in Ancient Greek culture. Nietzsche wrote,

> Socrates embodies that one side of the Hellenic, the Apollonian clarity, without any unrelated mixture. He appears as a pure transparent beam of light, as messenger and herald of science, which was to be born in Greece as well. However, science and art exclude each other. From this point of view, it is significant that Socrates was the first great Hellene [*der erste große Hellene*] who was ugly; this, as everything with him, is actually symbolic. He is the father of logic, which represents the character of pure science in the sharpest way. He is the destroyer of the music drama, which had concentrated in itself of the rays of the whole of Ancient art.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1995: 544-545)

By criticising Socrates and questioning the assumed cultural harmony in Classical Ancient Greece, Nietzsche was treading on dangerous ground: he was telling his audience that their idea of themselves, as practitioners of *Bildung*, was in part an illusion. The German word *Bildung* captures the quest for an ideal human development, based on the idea that in the Ancient Greek arts and culture, a unity

and harmony had existed. Supporters and practitioners of the ideal of *Bildung*, such as the writers Schiller and Goethe, perceived the Ancient Greek arts and culture as 'the product of an era in which thought and feeling, and reason and expression were in harmony' (Lebow, 2012: 153). *Bildung*, wrote the cultural sociologist Harvey Goldman, 'was the key to attaining a sense of self-worth, inner strength, and fulfilment' (Goldman, 1992: 26). During the nineteenth century, however, the demands placed on the individual created by scientific and industrial development represented a serious threat to the realisation of *Bildung*, since individual advancement increasingly revolved around a specialisation in a restricted field of work. '*Bildung,'* wrote Goldman,

> was integrated by [Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Alexander von] Humboldt into the German university, [yet] the development of the sciences and rationalisation in the nineteenth century threatened it and the strength it generated by bringing social fragmentation and specialization.
>
> (Goldman, 1992: 26)

Despite the acknowledged threats to *Bildung* before and during Nietzsche's era, its ideal remained very much alive and revered, and those attending Nietzsche's lecture on Socrates were most likely enthusiastic supporters of the ideal of *Bildung* (Goldman, 1992: 36-37; Berman, 1992: 63).

Because Nietzsche pointedly argued that Ancient Greece's Classical period should not be perceived as a golden era, 'Socrates and Tragedy' caused a very negative public reaction. In a letter written by Nietzsche to the orientalist scholar Paul Deussen, he reported that 'Socrates and Tragedy' had 'aroused hatred and anger'

(Sallis, 1991: 6).[9] In his talk, Nietzsche questioned, as quoted in the above text, the foundations of German and Western culture from its beginnings in Classical Greece by focussing on Socrates' role as the purveyor of Western rationalism. Socrates' rationalism not only negatively influenced the tragedies of Euripides, Nietzsche found, it also contributed to upsetting the balance of Ancient Greek cultural life. Nietzsche's criticism of Socrates led him to make the radical and unprecedented claim that the crisis in modernity originated with a crisis that had been taking place in Ancient Greek social and cultural life during the Classical period. Nietzsche then claimed that the death of tragedy as an art form, during the Classical period, indicated that Ancient Greek culture was not as integrated and harmonic as had been always believed.

It is arguable that Nietzsche's criticism of Western culture's foundations struck a chord with dance practitioners. During Nietzsche's day, a dancer's practice was not perceived as being among the higher Western artistic forms because, among other reasons, nineteenth-century dance could not be traced with any degree of certainty to the arts of Ancient Greece (Macintosh, 2013: 342). Moreover, dance was not yet associated, as were literature, drama, painting or music, with a canon of master works that could substantiate its historical and aesthetic legitimacy. A dance canon only began to be consolidated during the early part of the twentieth century.[10] In

[9] In another letter to his friend and fellow philologist Erwin Rhode, Nietzsche described the public reception of 'Socrates and Tragedy' as a mixture of 'terror and incomprehension' (Sallis, 1991: 6).

[10] It was arguably not until 1921, with the revival of Marius Petipa's *Sleeping Princess*

Nietzsche's analysis, the Greek tragedy had its most successful realisation in the works of Aeschylus and Sophocles. But with the third of the great classical tragedians, Euripides, in the late fifth century BCE, the balance of what Nietzsche later called the Apollonian and Dionysian impulses was overturned. Whatarguably affected Euripides' works was the progressive rationalisation of Greek cultural and social life championed by Socrates. Consequently, the new tragedies of Euripides and his successors began to focus on rationality and the individual. In Euripides's *The Bacchae* (2000 [c. 410 BCE]), the god Dionysus (or Bacchus, his Latinized name) is represented as a deceiver who delivers men and women into madness and murder (see verses 270-280, 571-575; 921-922; Hinden, 1981: 257). He is a figure associated not just with ecstasy but also with crime. Euripides's platonically influenced anxiety led to his reduction of the symbolic role of the communal chorus associated with ecstatic religion. Instead, Euripides turned to a naturalistic representation of common people as individual characters, with their personal ambitions and calculations. With the loss of the important role played by the

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or *Sleeping Beauty* (*Спящая красавица*) by the Ballets Russes, that the international ballet community began, in earnest, to assemble a canon (see Scholl 1994). The work had been originally created with music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, whose status as a classical composer helped sanction the creation of this work belonging in a canon. As a result of the Ballets Russes's international touring, today the works of Petipa and other choreographers of Imperial Russia are called 'classical ballets'. As for the modern dance community, the project of creating a canon is a relatively new idea, one that has taken on more urgency as modern dance companies are increasingly disappearing in the United States and Europe, following the deaths of their leaders. Those that are surviving have begun to feature historical modern dance works, as can be seen in the 2018 seasons of The Paul Taylor American Modern Dance Company and the Steven Petronio Dance Company, based in New York.

chorus, something of the strong communal spirit of the polis was also lost.[11] These developments, concluded Nietzsche, signalled a crisis in Ancient Greek culture. Moreover, it led to a Western value system based on the calculating logic and rationality championed by Socrates. The Dionysian impulse was thus submerged.

In 'Socrates and Tragedy', Nietzsche focussed on the decadence of the tragic form as a result of this submergence. As a departure point, Nietzsche forwarded the argument made by the Ancient Greek authors Aristophanes and Aristarchus that the tragedy did not end together with Ancient Greek culture, as precipitated by the Macedonian imperial conquest, the end of political freedom, or later catastrophes (see Schlegel, 1815: 141-142). Following Aristophanes and Aristarchus, Nietzsche argued that the great era of Classical tragedies had already come to an end during the era of Euripides (480–406 BCE), who fell under the rationalising influence of Socrates.

Nietzsche's understanding of Aristophanes and Aristarchus' perceptions about the decadence of the tragedy came by way of the poet and translator August Wilhelm von Schlegel's famous *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1815), a classic of

[11] According to Bernice Glatzner Rosenthal, in her *Nietzsche in Russia* (1986), Nietzsche loomed large among artists, who, as was the case with Michel Fokine and Vaslav Nijinsky, sought to break with the Russian Imperial ballet's conservative aesthetics through a Dionysian ethos. In both Fokine's *Petrushka* (1910) and Nijinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913), the *corps de ballet* is treated like a Greek tragic chorus. They are presented as a powerful collective who witnesses the central characters' demises.

Ancient Greek scholarship in Nietzsche's day. Nietzsche, however, disagreed with Schlegel's thesis that tragedy's decline was the result, after a certain point, of mediocrity and a lack of talent among the Ancient Greek poets. 'Tragedy ceased to exist', Schlegel wrote, 'because that species of poetry seemed to be exhausted, because it was abandoned, and because no person could again rise to the same elevation' (Schlegel, 1815: 201-202). In contrast to Schlegel's analysis of the decadence of the tragedy, Nietzsche argued that the demise of this art form was a symptom of a social and cultural crisis in Ancient Greece that involved the suppression of the Dionysian and the ascendance of the Apollonian.

For Nietzsche, as discussed above, Ancient Greek tragedy was linked to the cult of Dionysus through the ritual significance of dance. In their golden era, tragedies were able to balance Dionysian and Apollonian impulses, securing thus the harmony of Ancient Greek culture as a whole; yet that balance began to suffer under the influence of the rationalism championed by Socrates. Instead of considering Ancient Greece, in its entirety, as the source for the highest artistic and human values, as was the key premise in the German practice of *Bildung*, Nietzsche thought that the harmony and balance of Ancient Greek culture had already begun to erode during the fifth century BCE.

Nietzsche blamed the influential figure of Socrates, who he cast as symbolising Western rationality, for initiating a long trajectory of negative cultural

transformations.[12] Despite Nietzsche's rendering of Socrates into an 'ideal' type, to use the sociologist Max Weber's term, Nietzsche did relate some facts about Socrates's influence on Euripides that were drawn from historical sources, as summarised by the third century BCE writer Diogenes Laertius. In section 11.18 of *Lives of the Philosophers*, Laertius (1969) described the close relationship between Euripides and Socrates and referred to the curious fact that Socrates actually helped Euripides with the creation of the latter's tragedies. Laertius supported this statement with quotes from several Ancient Greek authors, including Aristophanes. Considering the connection between Sophocles and Euripides, Nietzsche explained how the tragedies of Euripides show certain innovations in terms of aesthetics and style. Nietzsche also drew from Schlegel (1815), who perceived that Euripides introduced a new realism; how in comparison to his two predecessors, Aeschylus and Sophocles, his plays were artistically disappointing. According to Schlegel, Euripides made the tragic characters behave like supposedly real and normal people: 'he applied to the heroic life, and the heroic ages, what could only be suitable for the social relations of his contemporaries' (Schlegel, 1815: 147). For Nietzsche, this new realism was achieved, in part, through the diminishment of the chorus, whose central role was to balance the irrational (or spiritual) forces of human nature, as produced through singing and dancing, with the rational (and

[12] It should be mentioned that Nietzsche's analysis of Socrates primarily stemmed from Plato's characterisation of him in Dialogues. For Nietzsche, Socrates was the founder—part real, part legendary—of a philosophical approach with an enormous impact on Western culture.

Socratic) forces of human development.

Nietzsche argued for a connection between Euripides's aesthetic innovations and Socrates's new 'rational' approach. The close association between the tragedian and the philosopher suggested for Nietzsche that Euripides and Socrates were part of a common cultural development. It can be said that the tragedies of Euripides attempt to create a rational art form, which mirrored the philosophical examination of culture and politics in Ancient Greek life by Socrates. As Nietzsche declared in his lecture, 'Euripides is the poet of Socratic rationalism' (Nietzsche, 1995: 540). For Nietzsche, the emphasis on the rational represented a serious disruption for tragedy, but more generally on how audiences understood the socio-political role of the arts in culture. As Schlegel had remarked, the characters in Euripides began to express themselves in arguments, justifying their own actions, and attacking the actions of their enemies. Schlegel (1815: 152) found this rhetorical trait in Euripides' tragedies deplorable in artistic terms. In Euripides, the chorus's song and dance were no longer intrinsically related to the action on stage (Schlegel, 1815: 145). For Nietzsche, Euripides changed the structure of tragedy. Consequently, the value of dance was downgraded. Nietzsche's own cultural project, among other proposals, argued for a revitalisation of dance in Western culture in order to counteract the excessive rationalism that could be traced originally to Socrates.

Towards the end of his second lecture, Nietzsche briefly introduced the kind of socio-cultural analysis that became key to his methodological argument in *BOT*.

Arguing that Socrates and Euripides embodied a one-sided aspect of the Hellenic character, represented by their emphasis on Apollonian clarity and rationality, Nietzsche implied that the repression and denial of Dionysian forces had destabilised the balance and potential of Ancient Greek culture. A rationalising spirit began to supersede the Dionysian impulse in the cultural life of the polis, which had been essential for the vitality of tragedy as a collective religious ritual, and as an art form. However, Nietzsche's lecture on Socrates' role in altering the balance of Ancient Greek culture, and his contribution to the decadence of the tragedy, had a rather abrupt ending. Its abruptness suggests that Nietzsche decided to cut the lecture short because of the audience's very negative reaction (Sallis, 1991: 6).

In *BOT* Nietzsche was finally able to bring to a conclusion the line of reasoning that ended rather abruptly at the end of his lecture on Socrates. For the German philosopher, Socrates' sceptical rationalism began the process of myth's cultural destruction. This destruction, Nietzsche then explained, was a point of departure for Western modernity, a culture dominated by rational abstraction:

> abstract man, without guidance from myth, abstract education, abstract morality, abstract law […] think of a culture which has no secure and sacred place of origin and which is condemned to exhaust every possibility… that is the present, the result of Socratism's determination to destroy myth.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 108)

Nietzsche theorised in 'Socrates and Tragedy' that Socrates and Plato inflicted a crisis in Ancient Greek socio-cultural life with their promotion of logical thinking in

combination with their disdain for the arts, and for the democratic life of the polis.[13] In Nietzsche's view, their goal was to impose a policy of austere rationality on the cultural life of Ancient Greece. Yet he also argued that their actions were in themselves aesthetic: Ancient Greek arts and culture had never been alienated from the calculating spirit, which was also an aesthetic impulse. As will be discussed in chapters 3 to 5, a rational aesthetic spirit has been also attributed to ballet. Volynsky, Schlemmer and Kirstein theorised how ballet's traditions stemmed from Ancient Greek culture, with its orientation toward logic and its value of physical discipline.

Nietzsche's ideas in both of his lectures developed further in *BOT,* a text that reflected his optimism and testified to his independent thinking. At the time of the book's publication, Nietzsche, age 27, was in his third year of being appointed 'Extraordinary Professor of Classical Philology' at the University of Basel (Smith, 2000: vii). He believed that some kind of artistic programme could be undertaken in order to recreate, or restore, the balance of Western culture lost since the time of the Ancient Greeks. Nietzsche wished to counteract what he perceived as the widespread and increasing cultural malaise of his time, which he identified as an excess of shallow rationalism, in contrast to the balance of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses that was expressed in the Ancient Greek tragedies of its golden

[13] Plato's disparagement of the arts has been often discussed. For an overview and analysis see Danto (1986: 1-21); and for Socrates and Plato's disdain for Athenian democracy, see Puchner (2010: 44-46).

era. In the decades following Nietzsche's death, several prominent dance figures, to be discussed in the next chapters, carried out Nietzsche's early confidence regarding the centrality, and transformative capacity of the arts for Western culture. With diverse, and sometimes conflicting interpretations of Nietzsche, they all shared the belief that dance could represent a key contribution for the development and self-understanding of any civilization. They forwarded the idea of dance as a powerful cultural realisation.

1.4 The Birth of Tragedy

In seven separate instances in his seminal 1872 text, Nietzsche described and defined the two fundamental orientations of Ancient Greek cultural life as the Apollonian and the Dionysian. He also defined them as artistic impulses (*Kunsttriebe*). He correlated, or made them equivalent, these term to the Olympian gods Apollo and Dionysus. Nietzsche introduced the concept that Max Weber (1946), John Rex (2002 [1974]) and Pierre Bourdieu (1990) later described as 'demystification'. The concept had an enormous impact on the development of sociological approaches to modernity, as the German sociologist Franz Solms-Laubach (2007) discussed in detail. As mentioned above, one of the most influential definitions of modernity, precisely as 'demystification of the world' by Max Weber, was clearly inspired by Nietzsche (Solms-Laubach, 2007: 86). For Nietzsche, tragic myths were the foremost artistic realisation of Western culture, and yet he found that tragedy had been undermined at the dawn of Western culture because it had become hostile to everything that was not rational and abstract. Nietzsche then

forwarded in *BOT* that contemporary Western culture and public life were being affected by an exhaustion, produced by an overemphasis on rationality that he alluded to as the Apollonian (Nietzsche, 1999: 108-109). The 'whole modern world', argued Nietzsche earlier in his text, championed as its highest ideal 'theoretical man', that is to say, a man 'equipped with the highest powers of understanding and working in the service of science, whose archetype and progenitor is Socrates' (Nietzsche, 1999: 86). This optimistic model based on scientific rationality, argued Nietzsche, seemed unable to avoid a 'catastrophe slumbering in the womb of theoretical culture', and this potential disaster, cautioned Nietzsche, 'is gradually beginning to frighten modern man; in other words, he is beginning to suspect the consequences of its own existence' (Nietzsche, 1999: 87). In Nietzsche's perception, Western optimism—which was based on scientific civilisation, with its beginning in the pioneering contributions to rationality and science in Ancient Greece—appeared to be falling deeper and deeper into a kind of pervasive pessimism. As musicologist Stephen Downes (2010: 66) has remarked, 'decadent pessimism' was for Nietzsche 'the path of the weary, exhausted modern subject'. The widespread impact of Nietzsche's thought in the following decades showed that his diagnosis had struck a chord among many readers. As Downes (2010: 65-112) further observed, Nietzsche provided an alternative to the basic malaise affecting Western societies by advancing the vital centrality of artistic experience. At the time, doubts about the European belief in constant progress, on the one hand, as well as critical appraisals of the dominant moral values of Western society, on the other hand, were starting to grow and circulate. Militarism and imperialism in Germany, the

crushing national defeats of France and Austria in wars against Germany, and the collapse of the revolutionary spirit of 1848, have been mentioned as some of the factors, among others, that created a widespread feeling that the optimism of the Enlightenment era had been exhausted (Downes, 2010: 63-64).

Nietzsche's idea of the arts as a necessary counterbalance to scientific rationalism had a widespread impact on musicians and writers in Continental Europe and Russia. According to Downes, not only was 'Nietzsche's diagnosis […] hugely influential', it

> shifted decadence from abject marginality to ambivalent prominence in modernity. Decadence thus rises above the merely topical or fashionable.
> (Downes, 2010: 4-5)

Nietzsche's diagnosis of the West as decadent and nihilistic was to become a major topic in academic and public conversation, as has been remarked upon by many philosophers including Michael Gillespie: 'under the influence of Nietzsche, many intellectuals came to be convinced', and to proclaim, that the end of the nineteenth century 'was an era of decadence and decline' (Gillespie, 2011: 291). As will be discussed in chapter 3, Nietzsche's diagnosis of a pervasive nihilism influenced Volynsky's and Duncan's rhetorical strategies in the 1910 and 1920s. In contrast to modern dance, argued Duncan, ballet was a decadent remnant of nineteenth-century Western culture. Meanwhile, Volynsky argued that the new dances created by Michel Fokine and Duncan—that were primarily being produced outside of Russia—were a sign of the West's decadence, as they shirked ballet traditions. Following Nietzsche, these early-twentieth century figures presented their form of

dance as an antidote to a perceived culture in decline.

Beginning with Ancient Greek culture and culminating with the works of Richard Wagner, Nietzsche offered in the 1872 publication of *BOT* a chronology of Western society's rise, decline and rise.[14] The text, though discursive, puts forward the following step- wise tenets: The Ancient Greek tragedy was born as a ritual in honour of Dionysus. This ritual allowed for impulses toward excess in a communal setting, where people drank plenty of wine, danced and sang together. With the development of tragedy as a complex art form, an individual tragic hero emerged who expressed the rational, calculating, individualistic strain of Ancient Greek life, as impressively embodied in Odysseus, the greatest hero of early epic poetry (see Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002: 40). This hero separated from the group and came to embody Apollonian calculation and strategy. He also confronted the group, as embodied by the chorus, thus creating the all-important interaction, and tension, between two impulses—defined as the Apollonian and the Dionysian—that Nietzsche argued were intrinsic to the cultural life of the Greek polis. According to Nietzsche, the classical tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles became the highest realisation of Ancient Greek cultural life. Their plays reflected and strengthened the

[14] *BOT* has been the subject of very few specific scholarly monographs, although some have appeared in the past years. The first comprehensive analysis of *BOT* in English is the now-celebrated work by M.S. Silk and J.P. Stern (1983). A few years later, David Lenson (1987) provided an introduction to *BOT* for the general public; another such general introduction has been more recently published by Douglas Burnham and Martin Jesinghausen (2010). More substantial and influential scholarly works focusing on *BOT* are the detailed studies by James Porter (2000) and Paul Daniels (2014).

energy and purpose of the communal life of the polis, making them not symbolic tokens of culture, but artistic experiences central to Ancient Greek culture and life.

1.5 Schopenhauer, Wagner and the Creation of Myths

In 1868, the 24-year-old Nietzsche described meeting the famous composer Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and bonding over their shared enthusiasm for Schopenhauer's ideas about music in *The World as Will and Representation*. (Prideaux, 2018: 3-4). Schopenhauer believed that music is 'a perfect universal language' (Schopenhauer, 2011: 334). The Nietzsche biographer Sue Prideaux explained that for Schopenhauer

> music was the one art capable of revealing the truth about the nature of being itself. Other arts such as painting and sculpture could only be representations of representations. This put them at two removes from the ultimate reality, the will. Music, however, being formless, in the sense of non-representational, had the capacity directly to access the will, by bypassing the intellect.
>
> (Prideaux, 2018: 50)

The notion that music expressed universal truth, posited Nietzsche scholar Douglas Smith, inspired Nietzsche to write *BOT*. According to Smith, Nietzsche first conceived tragedy as Dionysian through his experience with Wagner's music and Schopenhauer's discussion of the will (Smith, 2000: ix). Schopenhauer's notion of the will, in turn, drew inspiration from Immanuel Kant's consideration of the 'true essence'--alternatively defined as 'the thing in itself' (Smith, 2000: ix). Schopenhauer's proto-Dionysian attitude toward music can be found in this statement: 'I recognise in the deepest tones of harmony, in the bass, the lowest grades of the objectification of will, unorganised nature, the mass of the planet'

(Schopenhauer, 2011: 336). Correspondingly for Smith, Schopenhauer's discussion of representation was drawn from Kant's elaboration on the empirical (which he called 'the phenomenon'); it became key to Nietzsche's formulation of the Apollonian (Smith, 2000: ix). When Schopenhauer wrote, 'For in plastic and pictorial art it leads away from what is perceptibly given… to abstract thoughts', one can perceive a proto-Apollonian kind of thinking (Schopenhauer, 2011: 314). For Smith, Nietzsche's original concepts, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, stem from Schopenhauer and, by extension, from Kant's moral philosophy. Wagner's perspective on music, alongside Schopenhauer's and Kant's writings, created the foundation for Nietzsche's aesthetic philosophy.

Nietzsche's relationship with Wagner developed over 22 visits he made to the composer's home Tribschen in Lucerne, Switzerland (Prideaux, 2018: 54). During this time, Nietzsche was writing his first book. According to Smith, *BOT* was particularly influenced by Wagner's disdain for nineteenth-century Italian and French opera that subsequently inspired in him

> an alternative tradition, stretching from the Lutheran chorales to Beethoven, where music is allowed greater autonomy. At the end of this tradition stands Wagner, whose work represents the possibility of an imminent return of a culture based on myth and the Dionysian.
>
> (Smith, 2000: xx)

Through the inspiration of Wagner's myth-centred music, found Smith, Nietzsche proclaimed in *BOT* the need for a revitalisation of contemporary German culture, as exemplified in Wagner's Dionysian music, and as theorised from his understanding that later Greek tragedies, such as Euripides', deemphasised the

Dionysian (Smith, 2000: xvi).

In his classic study of Nietzsche, Walter Kaufmann considered that Wagner had more of a personal and psychological impact on the career of Nietzsche, but not an intellectual influence that was germinal or lasting: 'what [Nietzsche] received along those lines he was soon to outgrow and abandon' (Kaufmann, 1974: 30). The renowned Nietzsche expert R. J. Hollingdale concurred, describing the German philosopher's youthful connection to Wagner as a mere 'infatuation' that had no substantial theoretical results:

> his devotion to 'Wagnerism' was always ambiguous… with the fundamentals of Wagner's 'philosophy' he never agreed. Wagner's pose as philosopher and seer had no justification… his reasoning powers were of the slightest.
> (Hollingdale, 1999: 57-58)

However, the Wagner specialist Julian Young, as with Smith, more recently argued that the older composer's influence on the younger philosopher was strong and important, and it centred around two specific issues: the role of arts in culture and society, and the crucial significance of myth (Young, 2008: 223). Wagner shared with Nietzsche and the Romantics a critical disposition towards modernisation in cultural and social life (the Romantics' scepticism in this regard has been already mentioned above). For Wagner, one of the main problems with modern Western civilisation was its individualism, its rationalism, and the resulting atomisation of social life. Wagner believed that the arts had lost their capacity to create, or even to celebrate, the fellowship of a common purpose. In past eras, works of art, such as the Medieval cathedral, could bring together artists and craftsmen and they

could create a sense of shared goals within the community at large (Young, 2008: 223). Wagner found tragedy expressed and created the 'national' community, because, according to the ideas of his time, Wagner considered Ancient Greece as a 'nation' or 'national community' (Wagner, 1964: 63). Of course, this view of Ancient Greece does not correspond to contemporary academic perceptions; current scholarship regards nations and nationalism as specifically modern phenomena, thus unknown to the Ancient Greeks (Greenfeld, 2006: 159-160). Yet in Wagner's time historians and artists still thought of Ancient Greece as a source of inspiration for strengthening and developing European national ideas, and Wagner wrote accordingly:

> With the Greeks the perfect work of art, the drama, was the abstract and epitome of all that was expressible in the Grecian nature. It was the nation itself in intimate connection with its own history that stood mirrored in its artwork, that communed with itself and, within the span of a few hours, feasted its eyes with its own noblest essence.
>
> (Wagner, 1964: 63)

Furthermore, Wagner argued, as Nietzsche later did, that the tragedy was able to create and to recreate a powerful sense of community. Myths expressed the idea of the communal, which was later assumed by Wagner's idea of the folk. For the creator of *The Ring* (1848-1874), myths operated as a synthesis of the individual and the world. The individual became for Wagner enfolded into a national or folk community with shared goals and expectations through myth:

> By its faculty of thus using its force of imagination to bring before itself every thinkable reality and actuality, in widest reach but plain, succinct, and plastic shaping, the folk therefore becomes in mythos the creator of art; for these shapes must necessarily win artistic form and content, if—which, again, is their individual mark—they have sprung from nothing but man's longing for a sizable portrait of things, and thus from his yearning to recognize in the

> object portrayed, nay first to know therein, himself and his own-est essence: that god-creative essence.
>
> (Wagner, 1964: 89)

The Germany literary scholar Rüdiger Safranski (2002) underscored the connection of ideas about myth that Wagner and Nietzsche shared in respect to the figures of Dionysus and Apollo. Focussing on the period around the publication of *BOT*, Safranski argued that restoring the creation of myths to a central place in the artistic process was, for Wagner and Nietzsche, perhaps the most effective way to counteract the destructive developments of modern social and cultural forces:

> Richard Wagner and Friedrich Nietzsche […] set about finding or inventing new myths. Nietzsche looked back to the Greek gods Dionysus and Apollo in order to understand their elemental life and cultural forces […] Nietzsche and Wagner each attempted to resuscitate myth, and refused to put up with what Max Weber later called the 'disenchantment' of the world by rationalization, technology, and a bourgeois economic outlook. They […] saw in the sphere of art an opportunity to revitalize or re-create myths.
>
> (Safranski, 2002: 88)

In the end, however, Nietzsche and Wagner parted ways. Their dispute had personal, intellectual and artistic components, and it was already underway at the time of the 1872 publication of *BOT* (Young, 2008: 227). For example, the composer and the philosopher reacted very differently to the German victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 and 1871, and the subsequent creation of the German Empire in the following year. As described by Young, Wagner became an enthusiast of the German nationalist and imperialist policies commanded by Bismarck:

> In later life Wagner's nationalism took a different and much less palatable form. As Nietzsche put it in 1888, explaining his turn against Wagner, the middle-aged Wagner lost the 'cosmopolitan taste' of his youth, becoming instead *reichsdeutsch* […] a Bismarckian jingoist.
>
> (Young, 2008: 227)

Whereas Wagner increasingly embraced myths to synthesise the ideas of folk with nationhood in his artistic practice, Nietzsche employed myths to confront the excessively rational, disenchanted and calculating spirit of modern Western civilisation. As Max Weber (1946 [1915]) argued, a key component in the process of modernisation was the destruction of the cultural significance of myth, 'demystification' or 'disenchantment'. In restoring the mythic significance of Apollo and Dionysus, Nietzsche was questioning modern assumptions about the self and identity (to be discussed in chapter 2). Young described this position of Nietzsche's as 'the scientific refusal of the modern age to countenance anything inaccessible to the rational mind', resulting in a cultural predicament, a situation or climate 'in which myth—tragic, Dionysian myth, in particular—cannot flourish' (Young, 1992: 46).

Wagner, in contrast, turned towards the development of national or folk myths, and to music that subsequently supported and promoted German national identity, and state power. By Wagner's second festival at Bayreuth, in which he premiered his *Parsifal* (1882), he had turned to Christianity as a source of inspiration for the creation of artistic myths—a Christianity that Nietzsche came to critique and malign. In the following, the art critic Arthur Danto elaborated upon Nietzsche's sense that Wagner's shift from pagan myth to Christianity was intolerably hypocritical:

> The two men saw each other after this, but their sympathy had been irreparably ruptured. It became officially so, in effect, when, at the same time as Nietzsche sent Wagner his *Human, All-too-Human*, Wagner sent him

> a dedicated copy of *Parsifal*. In retrospect, Nietzsche spoke of the crossing of the two books as the crossing of two swords. He found in Wagner's new Christianity and in his old anti-Semitism further causes for repudiating his erstwhile mentor.
>
> (Danto, 2005: 4)

Nietzsche came to the conclusion that Wagner had turned into a philistine and that his artworks were becoming increasingly theatrical, in the derogatory sense of the word.

Nietzsche's strong disagreements with Wagner are borne out by *BOT*'s publication history. The text, stated Smith, 'begins not once but twice' (Smith, 2000: vii). Its first edition, in 1872, is not only dedicated to Wagner, but its subtitle *out of the spirit of music* points to Wagner's renovation of 'the spirit of Greek tragedy' through his 1859 music drama *Tristan and Isolde* (Smith, 2000: xx). *BOT*, continued Smith, experienced a second birth, four years later in 1876, when Nietzsche reissued the text with a new subtitle, *Or: Hellenism and Pessimism*, and a with a controversial preface, 'Attempt at Self-Criticism'. The preface can be understood as a refutation of Wagner (Prideaux, 2018: 66, 72). In it Nietzsche lamented that his original text failed 'to identify what should have been his real targets' for tragedy's demise: Christianity and modern science (Smith, 2000: xxv). According to Smith, Nietzsche rewrote in his preface the opposition between Dionysus—'the god of music, the art which is essentially non-representational and without physical form'—and Apollo—'the god of the plastic or representational arts of painting and sculpture'. In Nietzsche's preface Apollo is replaced by Christ as the oppressive force exerting a false rationality on culture (Smith, 2000: xvi, xxv).

For this thesis it is most interesting to consider, as stated for example by Martin Puchner (2010), that after Nietzsche's break with Wagner, the philosopher turned even more decisively to dance as an art form. Puchner elaborated on this turn of Nietzsche's by discussing the philosopher's increased interest in the Greek tragic chorus as a group of dancers:

> After Nietzsche dismissed Wagner as too theatrical, his primary interest shifted to dance. Dance had already played a role in his search for the origin of tragedy, since the chorus dances as well as sings […] Dance […] was beginning to emerge as Nietzsche's newly privileged performing art.
>
> (Puchner, 2010: 142)

In a slightly earlier text, the philosopher Horst Hutter also discussed the centrality of Nietzsche's interest in dance on his philosophical development: 'Nietzsche did not merely use the symbol of dance as a metaphor for the possible nimbleness of the human spirit. I believe that he actually considered dancing to be an important technique for soul care' (Hutter, 2006: 7). Hutter, as with Smith, discussed Nietzsche's association of the Apollonian to Christianity:

> The Christian regime of the soul results in a dividualistic structure, in which the conscious self is locked into an Apollonian prison of order, whereas the negative passions, the "wild waters of the soul," are locked into a Dionysian dungeon of chaotic strivings. *Dance is suggested as an ascetic technique to counteract the dividualism of Christian souls.* It aims to integrate the Dionysian chaos at the bottom of Christian souls by making Apollo and Dionysus dance with one another.
>
> (Hutter, 2006: 8, italics, mine)

The Apollonian and Christianity, for Nietzsche, regimented and isolated the individual. Dance, consequently, became its antithesis, its balancing force. Nietzsche's focus on dance as a privileged art form made his work particularly

interesting and influential among dance practitioners and dance writers in the following decades. Nietzsche formulated the idea of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses in terms that dance artists and writers, as will be discussed chapters 3 to 5, would later use to identify their aims and innovate practices, and to articulate their understandings between modern dance and ballet. Such efforts for these dance figures came to include the questioning of personal, professional and gender boundaries in society. This questioning was the kind of critical analysis that had been urged by Nietzsche, and its consideration will be the subject of chapter 2.

Chapter 2

The Dancing Philosopher

[...] I had three great Masters, the three great precursors of the dance of our century—Beethoven, Nietzsche and Wagner. Beethoven created the dance in mighty rhythm. Wagner in sculptural form. Nietzsche in spirit. Nietzsche was the first dancing philosopher.

---Isadora Duncan, *My Life*

2.1 Introduction

The work of Nietzsche, 'the dancing philosopher', had a very special significance for Isadora Duncan, as shown in the epigraph above, and also for other key modern dance figures, such as Mary Wigman, Doris Humphrey, Martha Graham and José Limón (Manning, 2006 [1993]; Ragona, 1994; Limón, 2001; Lamothe, 2006; Santos, 2009). Those artists were modern dance practitioners who often defied their culture's conventional gender roles in their careers, work, and self-presentation. Furthermore, they read Nietzsche and acknowledged his influence on their own thinking in their writings, often in connection with the issue of gender roles in dance. This can seem surprising, at first, because Nietzsche always had the reputation of being a fierce misogynist (Clark, 2015: 142). However, it must be observed that this apparent paradox, that is to say, the influence of Nietzsche's thought on the discussion of gender issues, went beyond the modern dance movement. The Nietzsche scholars Carol Diethe (1996) and Barbara Helm (2004) have described the impact that his work had on the development of the feminist political movement in late nineteenth-century Germany, particularly in respect to feminist thinkers and leaders, such as Hedwig Dohm, Helene Lange, Lili Braun, and Helene Stöcker (Diethe, 1996: 137). Curiously enough, by the turn of the century, as Helm indicated, Nietzsche was so popular among female readers in Germany that he was regarded as the 'philosopher of women' (Helm, 2004: 65).

The present chapter begins (2.1) with an analysis of the diverse mentions and

explorations of gender in *BOT* in order to show that the issue had a significant presence in the philosopher's articulation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. This section aims to show that the reading and interpretation of Nietzsche by early modern dance figures was not arbitrary, since the philosopher's work already contained several clues and intellectual tools for the criticism of gender roles that dance makers were to carry out in their writings and artistic practices.

The attention that prominent dance figures paid to Nietzsche's work was primarily connected to the fact that this philosopher was keenly interested in dance, and he regarded this art form as a relevant cultural phenomenon. As will be also discussed in the first section of this chapter (2.1), the subject of dance already existed in Nietzsche's early public lecture *The Greek Music Drama*, from the year 1870, and then in *BOT*, published in 1872. Movement as an artform was a subject he took seriously. Nietzsche's 1870 lecture offered an original perspective on Ancient Greek tragedy, as discussed in chapter 1. Dance, he argued, was not only key to the performance of tragedies on stage, but it was also central to the tragic drama's function of reaffirming the political and social values inherent in communal and religious rituals. At the time of Nietzsche's first contributions, a strong disdain for dance existed in Western-educated circles, and this disdain influenced the ways in which the arts in Ancient Greece were interpreted (Macintosh, 2013: 342). Following such general disregard for dance, classic scholars at the time proclaimed

that the Ancient Greeks did not perceive dance as an interesting or significant art form (see Lewes, 1845: 346-7; Macintosh, 2011: 46). Nietzsche introduced a fundamental reassessment of dance's relevance in Ancient Greek culture by arguing that dance played a prominent, if not a key role for the polis.

However, as the next section (2.2) of the chapter will discuss, Nietzsche's many statements about the cultural significance of dance have not been always properly acknowledged by those writing about Nietzsche in the discipline of scholarly philosophy. Both in the past, and recently, prestigious experts on Nietzsche tended to consider the many references to dance in the German philosopher's work as mostly 'metaphoric', that is to say, as statements referring to styles or qualities of abstract thought, such as lightness, playfulness, or dynamism. This section will attempt to show that Nietzsche was actually referring to dance as a physical, bodily activity when he discussed this art form. He was not merely employing the idea of dance as a metaphor. In contrast to mainstream academic philosophy, the next sections will show that scholars associated with the disciplines of gender studies (2.4) and dance studies (2.5) often consider dance in terms of actual physical or bodily activity, while discussing it as a methodological principle in Nietzsche's work. These scholars understand Nietzsche's perspective on dance as part of his profound criticism of the divided relationship between the body and mind in Western culture. To conclude, sections 3 to 5 of the present chapter will analyse how the disciplinary presuppositions and methods of various scholars have structured the ongoing debates about Nietzsche's influence. Even as the areas of philosophy, gender

studies and dance studies may overlap in relation to themes and methods, each scholar's research approach is understood, generally speaking, to be delimited by his or her specific academic orientation.

2.2 Art and Gender Identities in *The Birth of Tragedy*

In the very first sentence of *BOT*, Nietzsche introduced the duality and opposition of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The opening sentence of Nietzsche's, quoted below, suggests that he intended to describe this conflict in a 'naturalistic' way, by comparing it to the opposition and attraction of the sexes, as if to argue that the conflict was based in biology:

> We shall have gained much for the science of aesthetics when we have come to realize, not just through logical insight but also with the certainty of something directly apprehended, that the continuous evolution of art is bound up with the duality of the Apolline and the Dionysiac *in much the same way as reproduction depends on there being two sexes which co-exist in a state of perpetual conflict* interrupted only occasionally by periods of reconciliation.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 14, italics, mine)

By presenting the Apollonian and the Dionysian as a conflict between the biological sexes, Nietzsche made clear that he was not going to engage in an academic, historical, or philological analysis, which had been characteristic of his 1870 lectures 'The Greek Music Drama' and 'Socrates and Tragedy'. Instead, in *BOT*, Nietzsche decided to employ metaphors deliberately and creatively. Dispensing with a reconstruction of the archaeological origins of the Ancient Greek tragedy, Nietzsche

explained tragedy's birth through a biological analogy in the first sentence of his 1872 text. A few lines later, Nietzsche alerted the reader to the fact that the biological was merely a metaphor. It served to promote his thesis about how the birth of the artistic creation, called 'Attic tragedy', came about:

> These two very different drives (*Triebe*) exist side by side, mostly in open conflict, stimulating and provoking one another to give birth to ever-new, more vigorous offspring in whom they perpetuate the conflict inherent in the opposition between them, *an opposition only apparently bridged by the common term 'art'* - until eventually, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic 'Will', they appear paired and, in this pairing, finally engender a work of art which is Dionysiac and Apolline in equal measure: Attic tragedy.
>
> (Nietzsche 1999: 14, italics, mine)

By stating that both artistic impulses, the Dionysian and the Apollonian, gave birth to their child, Ancient Greek tragedy, Nietzsche 'solved' the question that was the subject of so much philological discussion in his lectures of 1870. Thus, in the first paragraph of *BOT*, quoted above, the birth of this art form was explained as nothing more complicated than the 'pairing' (*Paarung*) of Apollo and Dionysus.

Nietzsche's sexual pairing of Apollo and Dionysus, which produced their offspring, tragedy, nonetheless presented a conundrum: both gods had been always represented as men. Or as the philosopher and literary scholar Frances Nesbitt Oppel contended,

> the immediate problem that this analogy poses is that Apollo and Dionysus are mythical Greek gods of the masculine persuasion, whose sexual union for purposes of procreation is out of the question.
>
> (Oppel, 2005: 63)

Yet in the realm of metaphor and myth, nothing is really out of the question. After all, Dionysus was said to be born out of Zeus's thigh, which is also biologically impossible. Nietzsche's fantastic metaphor deliberately transcended the realm of biological plausibility, especially in the context of tragic myth. Through the pairing of Apollo and Dionysus, Nietzsche deployed Greek mythological ancestry as a way of understanding the arts. Even more importantly, he was already beginning to treat the issue of gender in a visibly unorthodox way, by proposing two males figures whose metaphorical 'pairing' produces offspring. In *BOT*, as well as in other of his writings published around the same time, as will be discussed in the following, Nietzsche began to hint at the idea that gender distinctions are, partly, cultural constructs.

Shortly after publishing *BOT*, Nietzsche finished 'On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense'; the 1873 manuscript remained unpublished during his lifetime, but in it Nietzsche maintained that nothing is completely true in the sense of a perfect correlation between language and reality. Language, he wrote, is based on cultural and philological conventions:

> And, besides, what is the status of those conventions of language? Are they perhaps products of knowledge, of the sense of truth? Is there a perfect match between things and their designations? Is language the full and adequate expression of all realities?
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 143)

Nietzsche declared that concepts and distinctions are arbitrary; language cannot claim to capture reality in full. In the next few lines of his manuscript, Nietzsche

illustrated his point about the arbitrariness of language by considering the issue of assigning gender to nouns:

> We divide things up by gender, describing a tree as masculine and a plant as feminine[15] - how arbitrary these translations are! How far they have flown beyond the canon of certainty!
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 143)

Nietzsche was not saying here that he believed that masculine and feminine nouns in written language correspond to sexual personae, he was only describing the gender of nouns as an arbitrary convention, a product of culture and history. Nevertheless, as a philologist Nietzsche was acutely sensitive to the changing meanings of words through time and in various languages, and he was perhaps intending to extend this kind of analysis to distinctions that went beyond mere grammatical gender. Such a notion of cultural influences acting on gender distinctions in language has been clearly affirmed by scholars commenting on Nietzsche. For example, Oppel posited in her book *Nietzsche and Gender* that 'Nietzsche makes a radical move towards destabilizing sex-gender paradigms' (Oppel, 2005: 66). In the cases of Duncan, Wigman and Graham, all of whom were readers of Nietzsche, it is interesting to consider that they made dance works that criticised strongly the dominant conventions of the female dancing body in their time. The mature work of Duncan and Graham, as well as the early work of Wigman, attacked the notion of the female dancer as valuable for her ethereality, youthfulness or submissiveness. As will be discussed in chapters 3 to 6, these

[15] In German, tree (*der Baum*) is masculine and plant (*die Pflanze*) is feminine.

choreographers seem to have drawn some inspiration from the contexts of Dionysian irrationality, not only as an artistic impulse, but also as means to counter conventional depictions of socially compliant women.

In the discussion that follows, several literary images and arguments in *BOT* will be analysed to suggest, or point the way, to Oppel's contention that Nietzsche disrupted the conventional perceptions of gender that were dominant in Western societies of his day. As previously discussed, Nietzsche's first book begins with a major statement proposing an infringement of gender roles, because the 'miraculous' birth of tragedy is seen to result from the pairing of two masculine gods. Then there is the matter of Nietzsche choosing the god Dionysus as a key inspiration, together with Apollo, to discuss the power of Ancient Greek tragedy. As observed by classicist Susan Guettel Cole (2007: 328), Dionysus is often described in myth and poetry as dressing in woman's clothing and acting like a girl. If Nietzsche had chosen two other gods as parents of the child 'tragedy', for example Ares and Hephaestus, it would not suggest anything in particular except perhaps a bad joke, since there is nothing feminine about either of these two gods: the image would make no sense whatsoever.[16] In contrast, Nietzsche's choice of the cross-dressing Dionysus hints at a transgression of conventional gender roles. This was more than just a joke because Dionysus had actually some feminine traits

[16] Ares and Hephaestus are two of the deities in ancient Greek religion and mythology. Ares, the god of war, and Hephaestus, the god of metalworking, were represented as males. They have been described as 'the two legitimate male offspring of Zeus and Hera' (Clay, 2011: 250).

or associations in ancient myth, as will be next considered.

One version of the conception and birth of Dionysus appears in the first century BCE work commonly referred to as the *Library of Apollodorus* (1976). In the text, Dionysus is described as being raised as a girl by King Athamas and his wife Ino; his crossdressing is carried out in order to protect him from the vengeance of Zeus' wife, Hera. She was angered that her husband had conceived Dionysus after having an adulterous affair with the mortal Semele. In one of the extant fragments (61 TrGF) from Aeschylus's lost tragedy *Edonians* (2009 [499-456 BCE]), Dionysus is called 'girly-boy' (*gunnis*) by Lykourgos, the King of the Edonians. In Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* (lines 211-212), the chorus refers to Dionysus as 'the one who wears the same outfit as the maenads'. As an adolescent and adult, Dionysus retained the feminine or womanly traits associated with being raised as a girl, and he was often depicted wearing female clothing in Ancient Greek art, as indicated by the classics scholar Susan Cole (2007: 328). In a well-known scene from Euripides' *The Bacchae* (lines 1270-1290), Dionysus's crossdressing is used as a weapon to cause the downfall of Pentheus, King of Thebes. As the commander of the male-centred social order of the polis, Pentheus wants to lead a military expedition to annihilate the Maenads, who are about to celebrate forbidden Dionysian rites on top of Mount Kithaeron. Dionysus convinces Pentheus to spy on the women before the expedition, and he has him dress as a Maenad. Yet the Maenads see through Pentheus's disguise; they tear him apart, limb by limb. Dionysus, the crossdresser and cultic leader of female rebels, is characterised in

BOT by Nietzsche as a subverter of gender conventions. It is important to note how radical Nietzsche's vision was. In his day, in mid to late nineteenth-century Western culture, gender was predominantly perceived as biologically determined, shaping the behaviour and mental outlook of the sexes (Malane, 2005: 19). Wittingly or unwittingly, Nietzsche posited that Ancient Greek constructions of gender were actually more fluid than in the nineteenth century. For Nietzsche, the literary-historical figure who embodies the deconstruction of gender is Dionysus.

In the opening pages of *BOT*, a second dislocation of gender takes place. It too could point toward the cultural dimension, or expansion, that Nietzsche gave to gender roles. It concerns Nietzsche's discussion of the two diverse conceptions of original sin: one from the Ancient Greek or 'Aryan' cultures, and the other from the Biblical, Christian or 'Semitic' cultural tradition.[17] According to Nietzsche, the notion of original sin in Aryan cultures is understood as masculine. While in Semitic cultures, the notion of original sin is invested with feminine characteristics:

> Thus great wrongdoing is understood as masculine by the Aryans, but as feminine by the Semites, just as the original wrong was committed by a man and the original sin by a woman.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 50)

That said, the distinction or opposition of the gender ascribed to original sin, in each

[17] The employment of the terms 'Aryan' and 'Semite' fell out favour after World War II because of their racist use by the Nazis. Today, however, there is a near unanimous consensus among experts (see Golomb & Wistrich, 2002) that Nietzsche's use of the terms was neither racist nor a precursor of fascism or Nazism. For an alternative reading of Nietzsche's connection to Nazi ideology, see the German-Jewish scholar Walter Herbert Sokel (2006).

culture, was not an absolute. It is worth noting that among the Ancient Greek and Aryan peoples, original sin occurred through the male god Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods (rather than receiving it as a gift from heaven through a bolt of lightning). The male sinner Prometheus paid for his ability to wrest power from the gods, and to empower humanity to make fire, through an eternal punishment.[18] In respect to the Semitic and Christian people's idea of original sin, there is the story of Adam and Eve. They are also punished for conquering knowledge for humanity, but it is Eve who is presented as being in the wrong, as she tempted Adam to eat the fruit of knowledge. Both myths, thus far, have a certain similarity in their structure: acquisition of knowledge leads to perdition. What is fascinating is how Nietzsche in *BOT* introduced a gendered metaphor to capture both the connection between—and the distinction of—these two cultural traditions:

> Originally, the legend of Prometheus belonged to the entire community of Aryan peoples and documented their talent for the profound and the tragic; indeed, *it is not unlikely that this myth is as significant for the Aryan character as the myth of the Fall is for the Semitic character, and that the relationship between the two myths is like that between brother and sister*.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 49, italics, mine)

Nietzsche's metaphor, in which the opposing conceptions of original sin in Aryan and Semitic cultures are like brother and sister, dispels the notion that he could have been using those terms in a racialist sense. On the contrary, Nietzsche suggested through his metaphor that Aryan and Semitic cultures are related by blood, that they

[18] According to the political theorist Jeffrey Church (2011, 334-336), Nietzsche identified himself with the Titan Prometheus in *BOT*. He presented himself, wrote Smith, as 'the unbound Prometheus, a Dionysian figure in revolt against the rule of the Olympian Apollo' (Nietzsche and Smith, 2000: xix).

are members of the same family. In the following, Nietzsche further developed his metaphoric connections. He posited that the issue of original sin has a connection to gender identities. In a sentence of *BOT,* already quoted above and as it is rendered in the original German, Nietzsche chose the masculine German noun for 'great wrongdoing' (*der Frevel*) and the feminine German noun for 'sin' (*die Sünde*):

> Thus great wrongdoing [*der Frevel*] is understood as masculine by the Aryans, but as feminine by the Semites, just as the original wrong was committed by a man and the original sin [*die Sünde*] by a woman.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 50)

The fact that Nietzsche used German words, instead of employing Greek or Hebrew words (as he did in other instances in his text), may signal that he wanted to emphasise that languages have diverse options for expressing things in feminine or masculine terms. In choosing the male noun *Frevel* (and connecting it to Prometheus and Aryanism), and by choosing the female noun *Sünde* (and connecting it to Eve and Semitism/Catholicism), Nietzsche was treating them as partially synonymous concepts. He appeared to be considering original sin in relationship to gender as a linguistic convention. These gendered distinctions will become important in the following chapters. It will be argued that, as it seemed with Nietzsche, the six dance figures under study also created opposing triangulations. Duncan, Wigman and Martin (in his discussion of Graham) connected Dionysus with modern dance and with a questioning, or defiance toward, of heteronormativity. Volynsky, Schlemmer and Kirstein (in his discussion of Balanchine) connected Apollo with ballet and with maleness, in the sense of ballet being perceived as overwhelmingly created through and developed by male

ballet masters. For a discussion of ballet's origins as connected to Apollo and as a male-centred choreographic art form, see Jennifer Homans (2010: 11-10). Homans joins with previous scholars in arguing that the premiere of the *Ballet Royal de la Nuit* (1653), in which a teenage King Louis XIV danced as Apollo, was a key moment in ballet's evolution. Another key event was the French king's establishment of the *Académie Royale de Danse* in 1661, whereby a coterie of male ballet masters was empowered to develop the art form on their own terms under the authority of the king. In these passages, the female presence is null, making it seem as though female dancers existed only much later, in the Romantic era of ballet.

In Nietzsche's next discussion of gender in *BOT*, which appears immediately following his disquisition on the relationship between the Aryan and the Semitic peoples, as quoted above, he analysed how the conventions of the feminine or masculine bear a connection to the Aryan conception of original sin:

> Humanity achieves the best and highest of which it is capable by committing an offence and must in turn accept the consequences of this, namely the whole flood of suffering and tribulations which the offended heavenly powers must in turn visit upon the human race as it strives nobly towards higher things: a bitter thought, but one which, thanks to the dignity it accords to the offence, contrasts strangely with *the Semitic myth of the Fall, where the origin of evil was seen to lie in curiosity, mendacious pretence, openness to seduction, lasciviousness, in short: in a whole series of predominantly feminine attributes*.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 50, italics, mine)

Nietzsche's statement can be read in at least two ways. It could be understood that Nietzsche was a misogynist; his statement expressed how 'feminine' characteristics of the myth of the Fall, such as mendacity and 'lasciviousness', are universal traits

of women in every culture. Alternatively, the statement could signify Nietzsche's understanding that, in the myth of the Fall, The Bible turns Eve into an inordinately curious temptress, and the root of evil. Perhaps Nietzsche was saying that just as tragedy defined and configured the character of the Ancient Greek individual, the Christian myth of the Fall defined and configured women in Western cultures. Indeed, one of the main subjects of *BOT* seems to be how identities, whether gender based or historical, are relatively pliable. After all, the key historical transitions discussed in Nietzsche's book are the death of tragedy, and the triumph of rationalism via Socrates and Plato; those historical transitions are clearly depicted as introducing substantial changes in the character and dispositions of individuals. In this way, Nietzsche's analysis in *BOT* tries to uncover 'the deepest root of the Hellenic character' (Nietzsche, 1999: 20).

It is arguable that Nietzsche's discussion of culture, myth and gender identities in *BOT* exercised some influence over debates on female identities, only a few years after its publication. This interpretation is borne out by philosophers Carol Diethe (1996) and Barbara Helm (2004), who have explored the substantial influence of Nietzsche on several key, late nineteenth-century feminists, as already mentioned above, such as Hedwig Dohm, Helene Lange, Lili Braun, and Helene Stöcker (Diethe, 1996: 137). By the turn of the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, as Helm states, Nietzsche was so popular among women in Germany that he was regarded

as the 'philosopher of women' (Helm, 2004: 65).[19] Nietzsche's influence on the female modern dancers under study can be understood in light of his influence on women more generally. As mentioned, and to be discussed further, Duncan's first concrete exposure to Nietzsche likely came in 1900 when she performed with the scholar Jane Ellen Harrison (1850-1928), who was part of the Cambridge Ritualists and who described herself as a 'disciple of Nietzsche,' (Carpentier, 1998: 4). The Literature scholar Martha Celeste Carpentier described how in 1900 Harrison was researching, with a 'scientific exactitude', the crucial role of 'chthonic' matriarchal rituals in Ancient Greece for her forthcoming text *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (1903) (Carpentier, 1998: 5). Harrison's interest in the female dimension of mythology, as partially influenced by Nietzsche, most certainly would have influenced Duncan. Moreover, Duncan's first widespread critical acclaim occurred through performances heavily attended by women, in Bucharest and Berlin (between 1900 and 1904), two central European cities where Nietzsche's writings were well read (Freifeld et al. 1998). Duncan's work in central Europe was followed, chronologically, by the central European *Ausdruckstanz* movement. It may have been spearheaded by Rudolf von Laban, but the majority of its practitioners, including the German-born Mary Wigman, were women. At the height of Wigman's fame in 1925, the German-American composer Louis Horst travelled to Germany to learn about its modernist musical and dance scenes. When

[19] Regarding Nietzsche's influence on feminist and deconstructionist writers from the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, see the contributions by Sarah Kofman, Luce Irgaray and Jacques Derrida in Oliver & Pearsall (1998).

he returned from his travels, with avowed appreciation for Wigman (Soares, 1992: 44-46), he sealed his collaborative partnership with the young choreographer Martha Graham, who went on to become a choreographer identified with an anti-heteronormative aesthetic (Mills, 2017: 62). Duncan, Wigman and Graham forged a choreographic aesthetic that redefined gender roles and identities. At the same time, Nietzsche's disquisition on male Apollonian values was taken up by Volynsky, Schlemmer and Kirstein (in his discussions of Balanchine). These statements will be discussed through detailed exemplification in chapters 3 to 5.

In *BOT*, Nietzsche went much further in his analysis of dance than in his 1870 lectures. In his book, dance is praised as a key artistic practice in Ancient Greece. The dancer and the dance are described 15 times, they are associated with the Dionysian, and are related to the idea of overcoming what Nietzsche described as 'the miserable glass vessel of human individuality' (Nietzsche, 1999: 101). Nietzsche moved away from his training as a classical philologist in *BOT* and toward a new identity as a philosopher with an ambitious proposal about the social importance of aesthetics. Beginning with mention of the Dionysiac dithyramb in *BOT*, Nietzsche stated that there is an intrinsic relationship between dance and the 'symbolic powers' of music; he then described this relationship, not just in the context of Ancient Greek culture, but also as a principle that had a general application:

> In the Dionysiac dithyramb man is stimulated to the highest intensification of his symbolic powers [...]. The essence of nature is bent on expressing itself; a new world of symbols is required, firstly the symbolism of the entire body, not just of the mouth, the face, the word, *but the full gesture of dance with its rhythmical movement of every limb*. *Then there is a sudden,*

> *tempestuous growth in music's other symbolic powers, in rhythm, dynamics, and harmony*.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 21, italics, mine)

BOT set the tone for the special role that Nietzsche would accord to dance for the rest of his intellectual career. Dance remained a source of inspiration, and a guiding principle for the German philosopher, in diverse ways. However, as to be discussed in the next section, some trained philosophers have not acknowledged the relevance of dance in Nietzsche's thought. In contrast to Duncan, as quoted in the epigraph of the present chapter above, certain philosophers seem averse to the consideration of Nietzsche as a true 'dancing philosopher'.

2.3 Nietzsche and Dance in the Philosophic Discipline

It might be expected that scholars devoted to philosophy would mention the fact that Nietzsche referred to dance so many times in his work, but this is often not the case. In several instances, philosophers of Nietzsche have come close to disregarding the subject of dance in their readings, except for when they include some extracted quote that has the word dance in it. To illustrate this indifference to dance among Nietzsche scholars, it will be shown how Walter Kaufmann (1974), Lee Spinks (2004) and Alain Badiou (2005), three highly-regarded Nietzsche experts separated by several decades, interpreted the role of dance in Nietzsche's texts in purely metaphorical terms. In other words, Nietzsche's many references to dance in his writings are perceived by these well-regarded philosophers, merely, as the means by which the author of *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

(1883-1885) and *Ecce Homo* (1888) expressed abstract ideas or principles of thought, such as lightness, subtlety or grace. To offset these Nietzsche scholars' scant or delimiting discourses on dance in the German philosopher's texts, the work of the philosopher Kathleen Higgins (1988) will be briefly discussed. Higgins, who is younger than Badiou and older than Spinks, analysed how dance in Nietzsche is a concrete activity and a commentary on patriarchal values. One wonders whether her insights have something to do with the fact that her perspective is informed by her gender. While discussing the scarce but very significant references to dance in Kaufmann, Spinks and Badiou's work, and also Higgins' more complex contribution, this section of chapter 2 will also describe the diverse sources that attest to Nietzsche's interest in dance as an actual physical activity, and not just as a metaphor for thought.

General introductions to Nietzsche, such as Kaufmann's, are understandably written from the perspective of philosophy. This is to be expected because Nietzsche, as an author, has become part of the pantheon, or canon, of celebrated Western philosophers, which includes Plato, Kant, Hegel and others. Yet to include Nietzsche in the hegemonic, canonical tradition goes to a certain extent against the radically innovative impulse of his philosophy, and as a consequence, identifying his place in the canon remains controversial. In the following, Kaufmann's *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1974) and Spinks' *Friedrich Nietzsche* (2004) will be discussed as examples of general introductions to Nietzsche by philosophers that tend to neglect or even ignore dance. Nietzsche's

more abstract ideas and theses, from the death of God to the Eternal Recurrence, among others, are often the exclusive focus of such works.

Originally published in 1950, Kaufmann's book on Nietzsche renovated interest in the German philosopher's works, specifically by arguing against the pervasive misconception that Nietzsche was a proto-Nazi. Following its publication, Kaufmann's book was pronounced a classic by the academic community of philosophers (see book reviews by Cerf, 1951; Koch, 1953; Watson, 1951). Notwithstanding the general acclaim for Kaufmann's thoroughgoing analysis of Nietzsche's work, the author only mentioned dance a handful of times. The first reference Kaufmann made to dance occurs in a footnote that belongs to his fifty-page biography of Nietzsche, and which, the author explained, provided the 'background' to Nietzsche's philosophy (Kaufmann, 1974: 21-79). In this biographical section, Kaufmann discussed Nietzsche's January 1889 mental collapse in Turin, Italy and its aftermath; he mentioned that the writers Julius Langbehn and Alfred Schuler proposed cures for the philosopher's troubled condition. In footnote 35 Kaufmann sarcastically wrote, 'Another man who hoped to cure Nietzsche—through a corybantic dance! —was Alfred Schuler' (Kaufmann, 1974: 68). Schuler, who was working to recreate Ancient Greek rituals, proposed that Nietzsche be treated with such an Ancient Greek cure, called precisely the 'corybantic cure'. As discussed in chapter 1, Ancient Greek rituals, like those in the Great Dionysia, included dancing. Given Kaufmann's offhand, if not condescending remark about Schuler's dancing cure, it should be noted that Schuler's suggestion stemmed from

Plato's and Aristotle's writings about ritual activity and madness. For both Greek philosophers, the corybantic cure was understood to be a medical treatment for madness, and they argued for its effectiveness in their writings (See Plato's *Laws*, lines 7.790-91, and Aristotle's *Politics*, section 1342a; see also Belfiore, 2014: 322). Furthermore, Aristotle regarded the concept of catharsis, in which pity and fear are experienced and transcended through the combined ritual activity of drama, dance and song, as the central significance of tragedies for the well-being of the polis, and this concept was originally developed in relation to the corybantic cure (Brown, 2014: 55). The Ancient Greek ritual dancing cure—in which the patient did not dance but only attended a performance—was also known as the 'Dionysian cure' (Jackson, 1999: 18). Given this context, to have a corybantic cure recreated and performed for Nietzsche seemed, on the part of Schuler, not a completely absurd suggestion. Nietzsche, after all, was a classicist who had dedicated much of his adult life to the study of Ancient Greece, and the cure would have had most likely a certain psychological or a placebo impact on his condition, which will be considered below. Nonetheless, Kaufmann found Schuler's proposed cure to be ridiculous. Given that Kaufmann had obtained a doctorate in religion and philosophy, it is odd that he completely derided Schuler's curative suggestion, which was strictly based on the religious philosophy of the Ancient Greeks.

As mentioned in Kaufman's text, Schuler thought that Nietzsche's collapse was provoked by mental stress, as opposed to a physiological malady (Kaufmann, 1974: 68). In Kaufmann's day, many believed that Nietzsche's collapse signalled a

physiological condition; specifically, that the philosopher was suffering from tertiary syphilis. Today, however, the notion that Nietzsche had syphilis has been completely debunked; recent medical research finds this explanation for Nietzsche's madness to be unsubstantiated and inconsistent with known evidence (Sax, 2003; Hemelsoet et al., 2008). Moreover, the myth that connected Nietzsche's madness to syphilis can now be understood as an opportunistic attempt to diminish or damage Nietzsche's reputation; in other words, Nietzsche was slandered (Sax, 2003: 52-53). Because Kaufmann (1974: 69) never endorsed the idea that Nietzsche had syphilis, it comes as a surprise that he would harshly dismiss Schuler's mild proposal, which was made with the understanding that Nietzsche's illness was mental as opposed to physiological. In 1950, when Kaufmann wrote his book, scientific psychiatry was still using very aggressive or even brutal cures, such as high-voltage electricity—and this aggressive approach was even worse during Nietzsche's lifetime, when psychiatry was in its infancy. Schuler's proposal of a Dionysian cure for Nietzsche would have caused no harm since the patient only had to watch the ritual performance. Be that as it may, Kaufmann's mention in footnote 39 of a 'corybantic cure!' is the only instance in his biography of Nietzsche where dance is mentioned in connection with the German philosopher's life (Kaufmann, 1974: 68). Moreover, dance, in this instance, ends up being associated with a proposed ancient cure that Kaufmann treated with contempt.

In the rest of his book, Kaufmann alluded to dance in respect to Nietzsche's writing just two more times. In the first instance, dance becomes part of Kaufmann's

discussion as to whether Nietzsche's idea about the death of God is, or is not, an affirmation of the philosopher's atheism. During this discussion, Kaufmann briefly compared Nietzsche's notion of the death of God to the position called 'postulated atheism', discussed by philosophers Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann (Kaufmann, 1974: 102). Postulated atheism negates God as a supernatural power in order to emphasize complete human responsibility for one's behaviour. Kaufmann observed that postulated atheism implies a very serious attitude towards moral matters, and that Nietzsche was actually against any kind of seriousness or spirit of gravity. In order to illustrate this point, Kaufmann quoted a famous epigram of Nietzsche's in which dance figures largely:

> we must not attribute to Nietzsche 'the postulated atheism of seriousness and responsibility' that is meant to ensure human responsibility [...] To anticipate: In the end Nietzsche did not ask for more 'seriousness' but (very unlike Max Scheler and the German existentialists) attacked the 'spirit of gravity' and said, 'I would believe only in a god who could dance.'
>
> (Kaufmann, 1974: 102)

Kaufmann understood Nietzsche's dictum on dance, 'I would believe only in a god who could dance', to be a metaphor in which dance, for Nietzsche, served as the opposite of seriousness or gravity in dealing with moral and existential responsibilities. According to Kaufmann's interpretation, Nietzsche did not mean dance to be an actual experience consisting of bodily movement, but instead an intellectual attitude that embraces levity and playfulness. As stated, and as will be discussed further below, the idea that dance cannot be a serious activity was relatively common in academic philosophy of the period. There occurred a false equivalence: dance and light-heartedness are often the same thing, and that the

former is a perfect metaphor for the latter. This kind of reading of Kaufmann's is biased, since dance not only can serve as metaphor for that which is serious, but also can be understood as that which is grave in tone and manner. As a scholar of Ancient Greek tragedy, Nietzsche was definitely aware of the fact that dance could be serious. The dances of the chorus in Ancient Greek tragedies were often the opposite of playful or light-hearted.

To further illustrate how Kaufmann's interpretation of dance is biased (or incorrect), it is interesting to consider how, in more recent times, Nietzsche scholars Paul Bishop and R.H. Stephenson (2005) responded to Nietzsche's quotation. For Bishop and Stephenson, the epigram, 'I would only believe in a god who knew how to dance', must be understood in the context of Weimar classicism, and particularly in connection to Schiller's proposed educational reforms, which included a substantial program of dance and gymnastics. As Bishop and Stephenson (2005: 128) pointed out, Nietzsche's references to a god that dances are quite concrete—not metaphorical—since the epigram clearly evokes a line from Schiller's 1795 poem, 'The Dance':

> Wish you to know it? It is the mighty Godhead euphonic
> Who into sociable dance settles the frolicking leap,
> Who, like Nemesis fair, on the golden rein of the rhythm
> Guides the raging desire and the uncivilized tames.
>
> (Schiller, 2003b: 68)

Schiller perceived dance as a crucial component of an integral education, as expressed by the German ideal of *Bildung*, which included the development of the

intellectual, moral, and artistic sensibilities (Giersdorf, 2017: 540). In Shiller's poem, quoted above, he describes dance as a goddess or 'Godhead' (*Gottheit*) and was also proposing dance as a guide to civilisation. As dance scholar Christina Thurner has indicated, there was certainly more than a metaphorical dimension to the issue of dance, as Schiller emphasised its value in his writings on education (Thurner, 2012: 17). Schiller was not merely promoting an intellectual attitude, which was opposed to seriousness or gravity, he meant literally that dance, as an artistic-spiritual expression realised through the body, had to be an essential part of education and general culture. This attitude toward dance and movement by Schiller and his intellectual peers, influenced German public life. Both gymnastics and dance became part of the curriculum at educational institutions, as well as a relevant component of German culture (Lempa, 2007: 117).

In Nietzsche's life dance was also a present, concrete activity. However, because of the repressive religious upbringing to which Nietzsche was subjected, he probably never received dance lessons, and he there is no evidence of him dancing socially (LaMothe, 2011: 19-20). But this did not mean that he did not dance at all, as will be further explained below. The incapacity to dance was a terrible notion for Nietzsche; in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he compared not being able to dance with not being able to speak:

> And once I wanted to dance as I had never danced before; over and beyond all heavens I wanted to dance. [...] Only in dance do I know how to speak the parables of the highest things—and now my highest parable remained unspoken in my limbs!
>
> (Nietzsche, 2006b: 87; italics, mine)

Nietzsche ostensibly practiced during his frequent and long walks in nature. His perception that his walks bore relationship to dance practice may have taken root through his reading of Schiller. Schiller's 1795 poem 'The Dance', quoted above, was composed in the same year as his poem 'The Walk' (Schiller, 2003a: 57; Schiller, 2003b: 68). Both work were written in Jena, shortly after Schiller finished his *Letters upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*. 'The Dance' and 'The Walk' deal with the same issues examined in the *Letters*, such as the oppositions and correlations between nature, emotions, art and social norms. The poems are, in a sense, companion pieces to *Letters* (Kooy, 2002: 68).

Nietzsche discussed the experience of his walks in *Ecce Homo* (1888) and *The Gay Science* (1882). For example, he wrote in *Ecce Homo* how a specific kind of walking experience in Nice, France, spurred him to further develop *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

> The following winter, under Nice's halcyon skies (which were shining for the first time in my life), I discovered the third book of *Zarathustra* [...] I could often be seen dancing; at that time, I could hike in the mountains for seven or eight hours at a time without any thought of tiredness. I slept well, I laughed a lot [...]
>
> (Nietzsche, 2005: 128)

In this fragment, Nietzsche suggested that he danced by himself at some point during the walks in the mountains. He stated that he 'could often be seen dancing', but this does not mean that he was actually seen; the context seems to imply a solitary activity. This unobserved dancing activity of Nietzsche's is confirmed by a second mention of it in *The Gay Science*:

> We are not among those who have ideas only between books, stimulated by books—our habit is to think outdoors, walking, jumping, climbing, dancing,

> preferably on lonely mountains or right by the sea where even the paths become thoughtful. Our first question about the value of a book, a person, or a piece of music is: 'Can they walk?' Even more, 'Can they dance?'
>
> (Nietzsche, 2001: 230)

Nietzsche mentioned dancing here as the last of four outdoor activities, and he immediately added, 'preferably on lonely mountains', again suggesting that he did actually dance during his walks without anyone in sight. At the end of the paragraph, walking and dancing are presented as almost sequential activities, walking as the first step to dancing, which is very much in the spirit of Schiller, whose poems 'The Walk' and 'The Dance' were composed in the same year. Dancing was perhaps a significant part, even a highpoint, of Nietzsche's walks. The idea that walking and dancing are sequential, related movement activities is very much the way Duncan described the awakening of the dance in her body: her walk was the preface for her dance (Daly, 2002: 80). The notion that Nietzsche practised dancing as a lonely activity is also confirmed by the report of his landlady in Turin, shortly before his mental collapse: she spied Nietzsche through a keyhole, and she reported watching him dancing naked in his room (Safranski, 2002: 232). Taking into account Nietzsche's private dancing during mountain hikes and in the solitude of his room, as well as his debt to Weimar aesthetics, and particularly to Schiller, his references to dance were clearly not meant, merely, as just a metaphor for a kind of intellectual attitude, such as lightness or subtlety of spirit. He was advocating for the elevation of dance as a concrete human activity.

The second mention of dance by Kaufmann in his book about Nietzsche was made

in respect to the philosopher's opinions about the death of God. Kaufmann briefly considered if not believing in the Christian God amounts to the same as being an atheist; he then postulated that Nietzsche was indeed religious in that he revered Dionysus. In this context, however, Kaufmann discussed how Nietzsche

> never mentioned Siva Nataraja, the dancing god of India, but declared himself a devotee of Dionysus. Should one then call him an atheist? I have tried to show elsewhere that such labels as 'atheism' and 'agnosticism' are altogether simpleminded and inadequate [...]
>
> (Kaufmann, 1974: 102)

The reference to Siva Nataraja by Kaufmann is rather surprising because Nietzsche never mentioned the Hindu God Siva, as Kaufmann himself admitted in the paragraph quoted above. Nevertheless, the connection between Siva and Dionysus, which Kaufmann proposed, but did not explore, concerns dance. Siva Nataraja is a dancing god, and Kaufmann specifically mentioned that fact. In a footnote later in his text, Kaufmann commented on a book by the celebrated philosopher and historian of Indian art Ananda Coosmarawasmy, and expressed a certain irritation toward Coosmarawasmy because he never compared Dionysus to Siva in his discussion of Nietzsche:

> Ananda Coomaraswamy, on the other hand, in his 'Cosmopolitan View of Nietzsche' in *The Dance of Siva* (1924), stresses the parallels between Nietzsche and the Oriental religions. Strange in view of the title of his book is his omission of any reference to Zarathustra's conception of the dancing god, which invites comparison with the lndian Dionysus, the Siva Nataraja.
>
> (Kaufmann, 1974: 323n)

Although Kaufmann criticised Coomaraswamy's omission, Kaufmann himself threw no more light on the parallels and differences between the two dancing divinities.

The relationship between both gods is that they danced, but that is where their similarities begin and end. Perhaps Kaufmann perceived dancing gods as integrally similar, or perhaps he perceived a dancing god like Dionysus as a rather exotic one, and thus evocative of India. Dionysus, suggested Kaufmann, should be of interest to Coomaraswamy because he is an expert on 'Oriental religions', but the fact of the matter is that Coomaraswamy (1918) did not employ the term 'Oriental religions' in any place in his book; this expression is Kaufmann's (1974: 323n). What Coomaraswamy was doing, according to his own terminology, was comparing some of Nietzsche's ideas to Indian and Chinese philosophical ideas. By imposing the term 'Oriental religions' on Coomaraswamy's analysis of Nietzsche, Kaufmann patronises Coomaraswamy's scholarship. Be that as it may, this is the last mention of dance in Kaufmann's book on Nietzsche, and again the reference is somewhat convoluted and rather negative, in terms of the 'missing' comparison of Siva and Dionysus by Coomaraswamy in regard to Nietzsche.

Written fifty-four years after Kaufmann's work on Nietzsche, Lee Spinks' *Friedrich Nietzsche* (2004) has also, like Kaufmann's text, garnered classic status. Published in a prestigious academic collection of introductions to key 'critical thinkers', *Friedrich Nietzsche* provides a general overview of the German philosopher's work, connects Nietzsche to diverse classic and contemporary literary authors, and includes ample references to the philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Because an important part of Deleuze's work is focussed on the body, in a very literal and concrete sense (Guillaume, 2011), Spinks's incorporation of Deleuze's ideas consequently creates

the expectation that the book will not ignore the relationship between dance, as a concrete bodily art form, and Nietzsche's philosophy. Because Spinks's study is published as part of a series, aimed to revise and reconsider key thinkers, his work also includes a discussion of Nietzsche and feminism. With this in mind, an expectation again arises that Nietzsche's thoughts on the issue of gender identities will be discussed in relation to dance.

Yet similarly to Kaufmann's general overview of Nietzsche, dance does not appear in the index of the study by Spinks, at all. The word 'dance' is only mentioned three times in the whole book, and two of these three mentions are quotes from Nietzsche. Although the study is organized around the examination of seven key ideas of Nietzsche's philosophy, the first and only time the author mentions dance occurs while discussing Nietzsche's 'Overman' (*Übermensch*). Spinks's analysis of the *Übermensch* is predicated on the notion that Nietzsche rejected nihilism and upheld a self-affirming attitude toward life. In this context, Spinks mentioned dance as something that is done by those who embrace self-affirmation:

> Those who do so render themselves fit to share Zarathustra's virtues: they embody lightness rather than the heaviness of resentiment; they dance through time by affirming risk, chance and their difference from slavish nature; and their laughter finds its echo in Dionysius who teaches the necessity of destruction and self-transcendence in the furtherance of life [...]
> (Spinks, 2004: 124)

Spinks's expression, 'dance through time by affirming risk, chance and their difference', employs the concept of dance as a metaphor. To dance, for Spinks, is the same as affirming risk and chance, and this conception indicates an intellectual

or emotional disposition. Moreover, 'dancing through time' seems to be a metaphor for the fact of living, according to those principles, because 'through time' does not seem to mean for Spinks rhythmically-performed, or time-based, dance steps. Dance is being employed, here and again, as a metaphor for lightness in intellectual and emotional matters, the opposite to the 'heaviness of resentment'.

Immediately following the above-cited paragraph, Spinks quoted from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. But unlike Spinks's interpretation of the concept of dance, Nietzsche's protagonist Zarathustra speaks about dance in a much more concrete way:

> If ever a breath came to me of creative breath and of that heavenly necessity that forces even accidents to dance astral rounds: If ever I laughed with the laugh of creative lightning that follows rumbling but obediently the long thunder of the deed [...]
>
> (Nietzsche, 2006b: 185)

In this passage, Nietzsche seemed to present dance as a concrete physical activity. Arguably, the poetic repetition of the word 'breath' evokes here the physical effort in dance. Indeed, breathing is fundamental to dancing. It is also possible that Nietzsche employed the poetic device of verbal repetition in order to create a rhythmic effect, akin to dance steps. Nietzsche's rhythmic effect is suggested through repetition in consecutive lines of the above-quoted text: 'breath' is repeated in the first phrase, and 'laughed / laugh' is repeated in the second. In sum, these diverse interpretive possibilities indicate that Nietzsche is referring to dance as a concrete activity of the living, breathing body. But Spinks misses this completely, as he sees dance only as a metaphor for 'affirming risk', among other

abstract notions.

The French philosopher Alain Badiou discussed Nietzsche's perspective on dance in his *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (Badiou, 2005). Badiou has been described as one of 'most important living' philosophers of our time (Bartlett and Clemens, 2014: 1). The French philosopher worked in academia for many decades, becoming chair in 1990 of the philosophy department at the *École Normale Supérieure* (Cvjeticanin, 2018). Moreover, his influence in France and abroad goes well beyond academic circles. Published originally in French in 1998, his *Handbook of Inaesthetics* presents a general perspective on aesthetics and the arts, while discussing four specific art forms: poetry, theatre, cinema, and dance. Chapter 6 of the book, with the title 'Dance as a Metaphor for Thought', constitutes a relatively independent essay on dance and philosophy, with a particular focus on Nietzsche. Due in particular to his quite provocative theses about dance, Badiou's essay has naturally created an interest among dance scholars (see Kunst, 2003; Clark, 2011; Botha, 2013; Cvejić, 2015). For the purposes of the present research, nevertheless, Badiou's discussion of Nietzsche will only be considered, although this will be done in context of the French philosopher's general theses on dance in their relationship to his interpretation of the German philosopher.

Badiou began his essay with the usual statement or perspective that academic philosophers generally apply to Nietzsche's ideas about dance: Nietzsche allegedly employed dance, as mentioned above, as a metaphor for ideas or intellectual

orientations. More specifically, Badiou maintained that, for Nietzsche, dance is a 'compulsory metaphor for thought' (Badiou, 2005: 57). He further elaborated on the metaphoric character of dance, explaining that for Nietzsche dance is 'first and foremost, the image of a thought substracted from every spirit of heaviness' (Badiou, 2005: 57). In its opening paragraphs, Badiou's essay barely differs from more conventional interpretations of Nietzsche, such as the works by Kaufmann and Spinks discussed earlier.

In the development of his argument, however, Badiou introduced more original but also more controversial theses; and some of his interpretations of Nietzsche may seem rather arbitrary. For example, after mentioning a sequence of images related to dance, which Badiou described as notions of Nietzschean inspiration, such as flying, birds, children, innocence, forgetting, playfulness, and others, Badiou continued with these two statements:

> And finally, dance is simply affirmation, because it makes the negative body—the shameful body—radiantly absent. Later, Nietzsche will also speak of fountains, still within the sequence of images that dissolve the spirit of heaviness.
>
> (Badiou, 2005: 58)

The notion that Nietzsche associated dance with affirmation seems intuitive and clarifying; it was originally introduced by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1962) in his book on Nietzsche.[20] Independently of Deleuze's interpretation of

[20] According to Deleuze, for Nietzsche to 'dance is to affirm becoming and the being of becoming' (Deleuze, 2006: 161). The idea of 'becoming' is a key notion both for Deleuze's interpretation of the German philosopher, and for the former's general philosophical concerns. For Deleuze, 'becoming; represents the affirmation of

Nietzsche, and his general philosophy of Nietzschean inspiration, which is not the focus of the present research, one thing is certain: there is no notion whatsoever of the body being 'shameful' in Nietzsche. It is actually quite surprising that Badiou would advance the notion of the 'shameful body' as an interpretation of Nietzschean thought. As is well known, the German philosopher strongly condemned those whom he called the 'despisers of the body' in works such as *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and, indeed, a general (positive) emphasis on the body characterises much of his philosophy. Nietzsche considered contempt for the body 'sick' and 'decadent', and it was one of his main criticisms against Christianity, precisely, that many ideas and practices of this religious world view despise or deny the body. Thus, for example, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote:

> It was the sick and the dying-out who despised the body and the earth and invented the heavenly and its redeeming drops of blood. But even these sweet and shadowy poisons they took from the body and the earth! […] Now they fancied themselves detached from this earth, these ingrates. But what did they have to thank for the fits and bliss of their detachment? Their body and this earth.
>
> (Nietzsche, 2006b: 21-22)

Likewise, in the 'Second Essay' of the *Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche attacked in strong terms the idea of being ashamed of or disgusted by one's own body, such as was prescribed, for example, by Pope Innocent III:

> The heavens darkened over man in direct proportion to the increase in his feeling shame at being man […] I mean the sickly mollycoddling and sermonizing, by means of which the animal 'man' is finally taught to be ashamed of all his instincts […] with Pope Innocent the Third ('conception in filth, loathsome method of feeding in the womb, sinfulness of the raw material of man, terrible stench, secretion of saliva, urine and excrement').

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difference as a fluid process, against the focus on fixed identities that characterizes traditional Western philosophy (Braidotti, 1993: 44).

(Nietzsche, 2006a: 43)

The summary of Pope Innocent's graphic description of humanity's 'raw material' by Nietzsche clearly reveals that he condemned the notion of the body as intrinsically shameful—and by no means was he writing about the body as a metaphor. Nonetheless, Badiou ascribed to Nietzsche the idea that the body is shameful; this ascription, although wrong, could be understood as a passing mistake committed by the French author. Given this circumstance, it is worth briefly discussing how Nietzsche criticised the conventional separation of body and mind in Western philosophy. In the first part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he declared that the body is as much part of 'the self' as the mind:

> Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a powerful commander, an unknown wise man—he is called self. He lives in your body, he is your body.
>
> (Nietzsche, 2006b: 23)

Nietzsche not only considered the body as part of the self, he declared in this passage that reason and 'spirit' reside *in* the body, that these dimensions of consciousness are instruments *of* the body. Nietzsche concluded this discussion, in his customary epigrammatic way by stating, 'There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom' (Nietzsche, 2006b: 23). Returning to Badiou, the issue is not only that he incorrectly interpreted Nietzsche's perception of the body, he ascribed in Nietzsche the idea that the body is somehow shameful. He also understood dance in Nietzsche as a metaphor for thought, predicated on his idea that dance makes 'the negative body […] radiantly absent' (Badiou, 2005: 57). This absence of the body, which dance would somehow make or create, seems to be

connected to the metaphor of dance as thought. Badiou stated that dance represents 'the image of a thought substracted from every spirit of heaviness' (Badiou, 2005: 57). In other words, for Badiou the body seems to be something heavy, which dance makes 'radiantly absent', and this is the reason for dance representing thought, in metaphorical terms. And since dance 'substracts' from every spirit of heaviness, dance makes the body absent; thus, dance and thought are the same, metaphorically speaking. As discussed above, for Nietzsche, reason and spirit are instruments of the body. The self and its thoughts are part of the body, there is no opposition between a 'heavy' body, and non-heavy or 'inmaterial' thoughts (Badiou, 2005: 57).

As mentioned, the philosopher Kathleen Higgins provided an alternative assessment of dance in Nietzsche. In her essay 'Gender in the Gay Science' (1998), she discussed how Nietzsche criticised Aristotle, the exemplar of Western higher rationality, by referring to him, in paragraph 75 of *The Gay Science* (1882), as 'an old dancing master' (Nietzsche, 2001: 76).[21] Nietzsche was 'making fun of Aristotle's Peripatetic school' in that it barred women, making it a poor school for Western dancing (Higgins, 1998: 148). Aristotle, intimated Higgins, was also a poor philosopher of women because of his presumption of the 'male to be the paradigm'

[21] Nietzsche wrote in *The Gay Science*, paragraph 75, the following about Aristotle's disquisition on the sexes: '"The third sex.—A small man is a paradox, but still a man; but small women seem to me, when compared to tall women, to belong to another sex", said an old dancing master. "A small woman is never beautiful—said old Aristotle"' (Nietzsche, 2001: 76).

of humanity (Higgins, 1998: 148). Moreover, Nietzsche's mockery in *The Gay Science* of Aristotle concerned the Greek philosopher's lack of rhythmic play in his prose style. In contrast to the plodding writing and dancing Aristotle, Nietzsche felt he danced his prose.

The analysis in this section serves as a foundation for discussing Nietzsche's impact on six figures' very specific conceptions of dance, as directly related to his terminology, the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The above-described tendency to interpret Nietzsche's writings about dance in delimiting ways was not unique to Kaufmann, Spinks and Badiou. Duncan and Volynsky, as well as Wigman, Schlemmer, Kirstein and Martin, directly, or indirectly, also employed Nietzsche's writings in ways that narrowed his totalising emphasis.

2.4 Nietzsche and Dance in Gender Studies

This section will consider how dance, as an art form and as a cultural practice, has a special interest for gender studies because of, for example, Western theatrical dance's long-time association with gender conventions and stereotypes. The influence of feminist and cultural studies on dance scholarship has led to an increased interest in historical perspectives on dance, including new approaches to the phenomenology of the body (two relevant early collections of essays in this specific research area are Thomas, 1993 and Desmond, 1997). Western historical dance works, those that are still performed in large opera houses, and those that are known through documented evidence, tend to display many characteristic

tropes or clichés regarding female roles, including figures such as dancing witches, prostitutes, concubines, and female ingénues. These gendered types, which sometimes combine with other cultural stereotypes such as orientalism and exoticism, have been analysed by gender studies scholars as constructions in which female personae are delineated through the dancing body (see, for example, Wolff, 1997). From these perspectives, Nietzsche's many references and discussions of dance can be employed as theoretical tools for a critical analysis of gender roles in this art form.

In the late 1970s, Nietzsche's work began to be re-examined by gender studies scholars, particularly in relation to a post-structuralist intellectual orientation led by semioticians like Jacques Derrida. In *Spurs, Nietzsche's Styles* (1979), Derrida advocated for a reassessment of Nietzsche through an examination of the philosopher's ideas on sexuality and gender. This book set in motion an examination of the social-political structures that form a person's gender identity. Following this and other post-structuralist works, the celebrated feminist scholars Luce Irigaray (1998), Sarah Kofman (1998), among others, published diverse writings elaborating upon Nietzsche's ideas. Their readings underscored how the German philosopher's writings critiqued the male-centric perspectives that had dominated Western philosophy and culture for many centuries. Despite this watershed moment, the new interpretations by female writers caused 'surprise, scepticism and anger', explained Barbara Helm (2004: 64). This was because many readers could not imagine Nietzsche being an ally to feminism. The German

philosopher was perceived as a fierce misogynist, in part because Nietzsche began writing in aphoristic statements, which were then popularised and taken out of the context of his work. One such oft-quoted saying by Nietzsche comes from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, when the Old Woman character says to the eponymous narrator, 'You go to women? Do not forget the whip' (Nietzsche, 2006b: 50).[22]

Late twentieth and early twenty-first century Nietzsche scholars, like Helm, were not the first to identify Nietzsche as a proto-feminist. A few years after *BOT*'s 1872 publication, intellectual and political leaders of the first-wave feminist movement in Germany praised the text. As previously mentioned, the positive receptions by Hedwig Dohm (1831-1919), Helene Lange (1848-1930), Helene Stöcker (1869-1943), and others, are documented in a pioneering work about Nietzsche by the scholar R. Hinton Thomas (1983) and are confirmed by more recent in-depth studies (Diethe, 1996; Helm, 2004; Oppel, 2005). In the following, an overview will be made regarding how contemporary Nietzsche scholars, working in the context of the discipline of gender studies, understand the philosopher's writings about dance.

[22] See Oppel (2005: 140) and Carol Diethe (2006), among others, for an analysis of the whip's significance in Nietzsche's 1883 text. They discuss how in a photograph from 1882, Lou Andreas-Salomé appears behind her suitors, Nietzsche and Paul Rée, yielding a toy whip in her hand. It is understood that she is to whip them, thus subverting the notion of female subjugation. Salome became a writer; fragments of her book about Nietzsche were published by Akim Volynsky in Russia's seminal modernist journal *The Northern Herald* (Tolstoy, 2017: 68-69).

Francis Oppel's *Nietzsche and Gender* discusses Nietzsche and dance in relationship to her thesis that 'Nietzsche makes a radical move towards destabilizing sex-gender paradigms' (Oppel, 2005: 66). According to Oppel, Nietzsche assigned dance in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as 'she', who becomes the partnering, counter-balancing force—the Dionysian to the Apollonian impulse. 'In the dance', Oppel explained, while quoting from Nietzsche's text,

> the partners do not move in harmony; the dance is 'mad,' and thus Dionysian, and Life becomes Dionysian/Medusa, whose serpent locks force Zarathustra to 'retire.' With this, she then advances—and so it goes, this dance of contradictions: 'Your fleeing allures me, your seeking secures me,' you, 'whose coldness inflames, whose hatred seduces, whose flight constrains, whose mockery—induces'.
>
> (Oppel, 2005: 176)

Oppel's excerpted quotes from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* elucidate the combative relationship that Nietzsche formulated for his protagonist vis-à-vis the other entity, characterised variously, as 'dance', 'Life', 'she'. The relationship between the two is stereotypically heteronormative: he pursues, she evades him; she is cold, he is inflamed. Their dance is madly passionate, yet it does not cause their destruction. It leads Zarathustra to healing his self-fragmentation. According to Oppel, Zarathustra's cure occurs through the dance, which represents for Nietzsche the 'state of possibility' (Oppel, 2005: 175-176).[23] Oppel also underscored that in order

[23] Oppel explained that Zarathustra's cure for self-fragmentation includes the following ingredients: 'laughter, dance, pain and suffering, pregnancy, childbirth, intoxication, solitude (private space), desire, love, attention and loyalty to the body and the earth. Over time, cultural repetition has marked many of these elements as 'feminine'' (Oppel, 2005: 157). And since dance is 'mad', as Oppel also contends, it produces a chaos but not a confusion: 'chaos is—and the text makes this clear in

for Zarathustra to master the dance, he must contend with her chaotic forces. If Zarathustra does so, he will transcend himself; he will become, wrote Oppel, the 'Übermensch' (Oppel, 2005: 159). Oppel's reading of Zarathustra's transformation into a collective consciousness through the 'Dance'-'Life'-'she' triumvirate takes place in the 'Second Dance Song' of the text.[24] In it, Nietzsche created a vision of Zarathustra in a boat. Oppel described his journey as one in which he dances the waves:

> Here the boat is tossing on the sea of longing and desire *for Life*. […] we sense that death and life are being drawn closer together. The tossing bark [of the boat] metamorphoses into Zarathustra's feet, 'tossing in a mad dance' with Life.
>
> (Oppel, 2005: 175-176, italics, author's)

From Oppel's reading, it could be said that Zarathustra's 'mad dance' in the boat is a critique of the epistemology of his Western, male, myth of superior self-understanding. Zarathustra must dance the feminine in order to reach the other shore. There, he will have the opportunity to heal his fragmented self and move beyond the all-too conventionally human.

Oppel's analysis of Nietzsche's dance metaphors as a key analytical device, that unpacks his perceptions on gender, echoes an earlier analysis by R. Hinton

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many ways—deferral of meaning, the state of possibility. A dancing star may be an Übermensch' (Oppel, 2005: 159).

[24] Oppel explained how in 'The Second Dance Song' of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the hero bids his soul to sing for him: 'This song is full of images of the Dionysian and the Apollonian as they interact […] inciting each other to a new creation as in *The Birth of Tragedy*, until the characters of the song finally come together in loving reconciliation' (Oppel, 2005: 175).

Thomas's in *Nietzsche in German Politics and Society, 1890-1918* (1983). In chapter seven, titled 'The feminist movement and Nietzsche', Thomas also discussed the 'Second Dance Song'. Yet he focussed on the beginning of the section, where Zarathustra describes 'Life' as the woman that he wants to dance with. In this instance, underscored Thomas, dance is not treated by Nietzsche conventionally; the philosopher's notion of dance, as quoted in this passage, is turbulent and exacting, as opposed to harmonious and ethereal:

> The dance has nothing, for example, to do with those associations of lightness and movement— 'divine ease, agility when most weighed down'— whose ramifications are so important in Nietzsche's philosophy. There is nothing effortless in this 'dance', and we are not surprised to find that both 'life' and Zarathustra are getting tired.
>
> (Thomas, 1988: 136)

Thomas's analysis of Nietzsche's representation of dance is understood literally and physically, in terms of physical bodies that are heavy and that can age and tire, as opposed to thoughts being thus. Like Oppel, Thomas is not a dance scholar. Yet he dedicated a part of his chapter on Nietzsche and the feminist movement to the issue of dance. Specifically, he developed the dance theme by arguing that Nietzsche discussed the dance/life duality as female, in which it is 'weighed down' and required 'effort'. Second, Thomas discussed the importance of dancing in respect to music (Thomas, 1983: 136). In the *Zarathustra* text, explained Thomas, Nietzsche wrote that Wagner's work is bad because it is not danceable or, arguably, suitable for the Apollonian dance principle:

> What now appalls [Nietzsche] is a 'wildness' and 'decay' of [Wagner's] rhythm, embodied in the kind of art that 'lacks proportion.' By contrast with Wagner, Nietzsche argues, hitherto in music 'one had to … dance'.
>
> (Thomas, 1988: 138)

For Nietzsche, the non-danceable quality of Wagner's music suggests decadence;

its rhythmic force is imbalanced. Thomas also called attention to *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, written directly after the publication of *Zarathustra*, where the philosopher amplified his thinking about the subject of dance and Wagner's music. Thomas quoted Nietzsche stating, 'Richard Wagner wanted another kind of movement—he overthrew the physiological first principle of all music before his time. It was no longer a matter of walking or dancing—we must swim' (Nietzsche, 1911: 61; Thomas, 1983: 138). Clearly, Wagner's music by 1885 did not produce for Nietzsche the all-important impulse (and pulse): to dance. 'It is more than he [Nietzsche] can stand', wrote Thomas (1983: 138). Nietzsche scorned Wagner, accusing him of creating a decaying empty melodrama, without its central force, or meter, that produces ritual transcendence. Wagner's music is

> the complete degeneration of the feeling for rhythm, chaos in the place of rhythm… The danger reaches its climax when such music cleaves ever more closely to naturalistic play-acting and pantomime, which governed by no laws of form, aim at effect and nothing more.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1911: 61-62)

Nietzsche's demand for pulse-driven music, in order to dance, is important for this study: it reflects a set of associations that Balanchine adhered to and Kirstein wrote about. As will be discussed in chapter 5, these associations concern the notion that dance is the muse (a female designation) that needs to pay heed and be shaped by the pulse-driven music (embodied by the composer, traditionally a male designation). In *Apollon Musagète* (1928) Balanchine allegorised his theory about pulse-driven music's priority in his choreography by having the longest *pas de deux* in the work be carried out between Terpsichore, the muse of dance and song, and Apollo, the young god of music. After her teaching of Apollo, he gathers his three

muses—Terpsichore, Polyhymnia (muse of mime) and Calliope (muse of poetry)—and steers them like horses in a chariot to his rightful place on Mount Olympus, the home of the Olympian gods. Moreover, Balanchine's perception of composers as asserting a necessary dominance over dance was key to his body of work. Indeed, Balanchine's theory of dance's deferential, or subordinate, relationship to music was one that was not shared by modern dance pioneers, such as Duncan, Wigman and Graham. As discussed above, Thomas revealed the complexity of Nietzsche's discussion about dance in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Dance represents masculine and feminine identities in which dance and music can be understood as equal to each other, as was the case in Ancient Greek culture. They are bound together by pulse, the march, the walk, the body.

The notion of dance and music becoming one—an important concept for Nietzsche—is also mentioned by the French Feminist philosopher Luce Irigaray 'Veiled Lips' (1988). Irigaray quoted Nietzsche's thesis on the centrality of song and dance in *BOT:* 'in the song and in dance man expresses himself as a member of a higher community… He is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art' (Irigaray, 1998: 118, fn. 22; Nietzsche, 1999: 18). As with the idea of song and dance intertwining, Nietzsche analogously expressed how the artist fused with the work to join a 'higher community'. Art and artists harmonise and merge.

2.5 Nietzsche and Dance in Dance Studies

Dance studies scholars tend to discuss Nietzsche's references to dance more

literally; that is to say, they connect the German philosopher's statements about dance as a physical activity as opposed to metaphors for a style or a way of thinking. In the present section, the dance studies scholars under consideration are Ramsey Burt (1990), Susan Jones (2010, 2013), Melissa Ragona (1994), Sondra Fraleigh (1987), Ernestine Stodelle (1978) and Arabella Stanger (2010) in that they devote in their essays and monographs considerable space to writing about Nietzsche's impact on dance. While documenting the impact of Nietzsche's philosophy on notable dancers' creative processes, they make clear that dance has a history with its own traditions, genres, and *raison d'êtres*. These scholars' work will be integrated, or referenced, into this project's case studies, dedicated to providing evidence and to demonstrating where Nietzsche's words entered the dancers' writings, performance programmes, and public speeches of Duncan and Volynsky (chapter 3), Wigman and Schlemmer (chapter 4) and Martin and Kirstein (chapter 6). Although there are important texts written by dance studies scholars that consider Nietzsche in connection to specific artistic figures, such as Duncan who drew documented inspiration from the philosopher, there are only a handful of writers who contend that Nietzsche had produced a substantial influence on the twentieth-century concert dance movement, as a whole. These above-listed scholars, to whose work I am indebted because of their broad-based thinking about Nietzsche and dance, will be the focus of the final section of this chapter.

In Ramsay Burt's *Zarathustra's Dancers* (1990), a nine-page article published at the beginning of the dance scholar's career, he examined Nietzsche's philosophy in

relation to the developing movement methodologies created by Émile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1950), founder of Eurythmics, and Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), founder of Eurythmy (Burt, 1990: 24). He then discussed how Nietzsche's writings influenced the movement philosophies of Rudolf von Laban and Mary Wigman. Burt's focus—Nietzsche's stated valorisations of dance and their influence and/or relationship to movement philosophies created by aforementioned figures in European dance history—seems to be to the first of its kind. Burt also suggested that the German philosopher's style of writing is influenced by the ephemeral, elusive quality of dance: 'Nietzsche wants words to dance and have their own effect and not to be too easily pinned down' (Burt, 1990: 26). Rather than understanding Nietzsche's references to dance in his writings as metaphors for thinking, Burt posited that Nietzsche's thinking bore inspiration from dance and it paid homage to dance aesthetics. As mentioned in chapter 1, Burt explained how dance helped to radicalise Nietzsche, especially in respect to his rejection of Christianity:

> Dance is of a course a bodily activity, and Nietzsche was fully aware that in asserting its importance in this way he was subverting a dualistic view of the body implicit in the scientific, rational and Christian culture of his day. It is this radical view of the body within his writings that make Nietzsche a significant philosopher for dance theory, and especially important for the development of modern dance at the beginning of the twentieth century.
>
> (Burt, 1990: 24)

While Burt did not dedicate a monograph to his interest in Nietzsche and dance, he paved the way for others to do so.

In the work on Nietzsche and dance by Susan Jones (2010; 2013), she provided one of the most ambitious and nuanced contributions to the argument that Nietzsche

influenced the development of twentieth-century concert dance. Jones's understanding of the field first developed as a soloist with the Scottish ballet, where she performed a wide range of repertoire. Her scholarly contributions that discuss Nietzsche include the essay 'Modernism Dance: Apolline and Dionysiac?' (2010), and the large-scale study *Literature, Modernism, and Dance* (2013). In her 2010 essay, Jones advanced a very original perspective on Nietzsche's impact on a century of Western concert dance:

> I show how radical developments in twentieth-century dance emerged from [Nietzsche's] aesthetics, in part initiating the vogue for the reconstructions of Greek dance in the early decades of the century which often rejected the constraints of classical ballet in favour of the liberating embodiment of Dionysiac energy. Finally, I discuss Balanchine's neoclassical revisionism in the light of these early twentieth-century shifts in dance aesthetics, arguing that Balanchine's later version of *Apollo* reversed the trend by moving away from Nietzsche's 'Dionysiac' mode with is emphasis on the rigorous struggles of the artist, toward a more assured 'Apolline' aesthetics of beauty.
>
> (Jones, 2010: 314-315)

According to Jones, modernist expression in Western concert dance drew deeply from Nietzsche's formulation of an Apollonian-Dionysian aesthetics. Jones first underscored that the aesthetic harmonisation between the Apollonian and Dionysian, which Nietzsche demanded, was an ideal, but rarely a reality. To support her contention, she discussed dance works that are Dionysian-oriented in contrast to those that are Apollonian-oriented. She theorised that the privileging of one aesthetic expression above another must be considered in respect to larger avant-garde trends in the arts, including those of literature and visual arts, and, most significantly, she argued that there existed in early to mid-twentieth century theatrical dance a movement from the Dionysian to the Apollonian. First there was

the emergence and vogue for the Dionysian that expressed itself through

> Isadora Duncan's expressivism; Vaslav Nijinsky's choreography for *The Rite of Spring* (1913); Fokine's interest in folk dance and ritual; and Mary Wigman's *Witch Dance* (1914), all suggest a Dionysiac energy that turns against the Apolline symmetry of classical ballet forms.
>
> (Jones, 2010: 315)

What is distinctive about Jones's listing is that it considers ballet and modern dance as a composite, as opposed to separate genres. Moreover, she did not rigidly assign renowned ballet choreographers to an Apollonian aesthetic, as is the tendency with Scholl (1994: 82) and Homans (2010: xxi-xxii), nor did she consider renowned modern dance figures in terms that are overwhelmingly Dionysian, as is the tendency of LaMothe and Fraleigh, whose writings will be discussed in this section below. Rather, Jones posited that Apollonian and Dionysian values concern, as Nietzsche had argued, the personal aesthetics of individual artists as shaped by their socio-cultural environment at specific points in time.[25]

Jones also theorised that as the twentieth century reached its mid-point, the Apollonian aesthetic in Western concert dance came increasingly to the fore. Significantly, the Apollonian values of restraint, order and logic concomitantly came to be construed as modernist for both ballet and modern dance artists, and thus more expressive of that era's aesthetic predilections (Jones, 2010: 314, 322-323). Jones supported this theory of an Apollonian/modernist 'trend' asserting itself over

[25] For Nietzsche's argument about the socio-cultural influence on the artist's aesthetic decisions, see the section in *BOT* in which the philosopher discusses Socrates's impact on Euripides's plays (Nietzsche 2003: 64-66).

a Dionysian/expressive one through her discussion of a definitive moment: Balanchine's 1979 reworking of *Apollo*. Revised in the last decade of the ballet choreographer's life, *Apollo*, explained Jones went through a radical downsizing of most of its Dionysian features. Balanchine carried this out by scrapping his ballet's choreography for and Stravinsky's music in the prologue scene, where the Dionysian element was most pronounced (Jones, 2010: 315). Today, with *Apollo*'s prologue scene gone, we do not see Apollo's mother, Leda, giving birth through a Martha Graham-esque series of plaintive contractions of the torso.[26] Nor do we see Apollo emerging from underneath the scaffolding of this birth scene and struggling to master his limbs. Instead, as Jones pointed out, we are given the 1979 restaging of the ballet, first performed by Mikhail Baryshnikov, in which the Greek god is introduced to the audience fully formed and in control of his body. Thus, Apollo's gifts no longer are inferred as coming out of Leda's body, and efforts. Rather, the message seems to be in the revised version that Apollo's gifts radiate down from his father, Zeus, who is given metaphorical status in the final moments of the ballet when Apollo and his three muses reach toward him on Mount Olympus.[27] It should be noted that Balanchine's changes to *Apollo*, between its premiere in 1928 and its final form prior to the choreographer's death in 1983, are numerous. The most

[26] My analysis of Balanchine's prologue in *Apollo* is based on the 1960 film (Balanchine, 2007).

[27] My analysis of the post-1979 version of Apollo is based on 35 years of intermittent viewings of the ballet as performed by New York City Ballet and American Ballet Theatre. During this time, the interpretations of Peter Martins, Nikolaj Hübbe, Marcelo Gomes, and Robert Fairchild have been particularly memorable in their performance of the eponymous lead in *Apollo* in terms how much, or little, they intermingled Apollonian and Dionysian qualities.

salient changes, as Jones stated, occurred in 1979, when Balanchine staged the work for Mikhail Baryshnikov, who had emerged out of the same hallowed ballet academy in St. Petersburg/Petrograd as the choreographer. Despite these changes in 1979 by Balanchine to his ballet, Jones underscored that the choreographer should not be perceived as a purely Apollonian one. Balanchine also drew inspiration, explained Jones, from the aesthetics of early modern dance in that he

> turned towards a Nietzschean idea of the Dionysiac as a foundation for a more energetic, athletic style of movement. Balanchine's physically exuberant neoclassicism, a style of choreography based on traditional classical ballet technique where movements were liberated from the confines of strictly symmetrical form.
>
> (Jones, 2010: 322-323)[28]

Through Jones's analysis of Balanchine, and her broader points about twentieth-century modern dance and ballet, she elucidated how these two artistic movements expressed a project: one in which Dionysian and then Apollonian aesthetics asserted themselves in differing degrees. Nietzsche's aesthetics, a half century later, continued to express the zeitgeist.

In *Literature, Modernism, and Dance*, Jones presented a re-evaluated trajectory of influence by Nietzsche on twentieth-century artists. Contrasting with the more

[28] In respect to Balanchine's inspiration outside of the realm of ballet, his work with African- American dancers working in the idioms of tap, Jazz and African diasporic dance were also formative and crucial influences on his energetic neoclassicism. In the 1930s, for example, Balanchine found inspiration from the aesthetics of Katherine Dunham and Herbie Harper, while collaborating with them, respectively, on Broadway and in London revues. For further readings on the subject of Balanchine and the aforementioned African-American dance artists, see Brenda Dixon Gottschild (1998), Sally Banes (2011), and Johanna Dee Das (2017).

typical analyses (see Ragona below), whereby dance figures are perceived as implementing modernism through the influence of literary and visual arts figures, Jones asserted that it was dancers who also influenced painters and writers' radical modernisms. This path of influence, Jones underscored, occurred with visual artists, such as Edgar Degas and Auguste Rodin, whose perceptions of dancing shaped their aesthetic visions. For Jones, this orientation might be said to be Nietzschean: The philosopher argued for a revision of Western culture, based on the body's received wisdom instead of its sublimation.

in Melissa Ragona's 'Ecstasy, Primitivism, Modernity, Isadora Duncan and Mary Wigman' (1994), she focussed on two modern dancers who

> sought to theorize a dance form that was not yet accepted into the canon of dance history; Duncan and Wigman reached to the Nietzschean ecstatic as a way of dismantling nineteenth-century precepts of realism, romanticism and subjectivity in art.
>
> (Ragona, 1994: 48)

Ragona then explained that Duncan and Wigman not only theorised their dance through Nietzsche's Dionysian, so as to set apart their female dancing bodies from a romantic topos, but they also embraced Nietzsche's ideas in order to differentiate themselves from ballet. For Duncan and Wigman, ballet was understood as considered and therefore of a higher value. Thus,

> In order to displace ballet from its hegemonic position, Duncan and Wigman had to find a way of suggesting that their 'new art' possessed both elements from the present and the classical past.
>
> (Ragona, 1994: 50)

As an example of how Duncan made her dance classical, Ragona quoted from

Duncan's 'The Dance of the Future' (1903). In it the dancer-choreographer casted aspersion on the traditional understanding of ballet as the classical art: 'Why', wrote Duncan, 'are [ballet's] positions in such contrast to the beautiful position of the antique sculptures which we preserve in our museums and which are constantly represented to us as perfect models of ideal beauty' (Duncan cited in Ragona, 1994: 52; Duncan, 2014 [1903]). Duncan's quest for a revisionist classicism based on Ancient Greek aesthetics, explained Ragona, aligned with Nietzsche's demand for a revision of Western culture through the re-examination of Ancient Greek tragedy.

Ragona's claim that there existed a conflict between modern dance and ballet is crucial for an understanding of the history of twentieth-century Western theatrical dance. Her thesis seemed to be built upon the work of Susan Manning (2006), in respect to Wigman, and of Ann Daly (2002), in respect to Duncan. Each scholar provided evidence to support the claim that Nietzsche helped Duncan and Wigman, respectively, articulate the conflict between ballet and modern dance through his discussion of the Dionysian and Apollonian creative impulses, which were in conflict with each other. Ragona synthesised their perspectives by discussing Duncan and Wigman together. Altogether, Ragona's claim that Duncan and Wigman employed Nietzschean strategies elucidates an important understanding: that dancer figures harnessed the writings of Nietzsche to argue for the value of their art form (Ragona, 1994: 50, 53, 54).

Whereas Jones, and to a lesser extent Ragona, considered Nietzsche's influence in

respect to how both twentieth-century modern dance and ballet developed, Sondra Fraleigh's monograph is solely devoted to considering Nietzsche's role among modern dancers. Her *Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics* (1987) asserts a phenomenology of modern dance. Fraleigh contended that, unlike the phenomenologists Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, it was only Nietzsche who wrote about consciousness through the example of dance. She also argued that modern dancers bear evidence, through their physical practice of Nietzsche's theory, of how the body is the site of received and developed knowledge. Because Fraleigh studied under Mary Wigman, Hanya Holm and Alwin Nikolais, but made no mention of ballet, it partially explains why her book focusses solely on modern dance as a site of embodied knowledge (Fraleigh, 1987: xxxi). In one strong instance, the subject of ballet serves as a counterpoint to her overarching argument that there exists an integral relationship between the primacy of feeling and modern dance. In contrast to modern dance, Fraleigh wrote of ballet: 'Plato's classical philosophy never exalts feeling above reason. In this he is a formalist. Likewise, classical ballet is sited in the sphere of ideal formalism' (Fraleigh, 1987: xxxv). Without making a direct claim, Fraleigh reductively connected ballet to the philosophical tradition of reason's primacy, as forged by Plato. Moreover, she quoted the analysis of ballet scholar and philosopher David Michael Levin, who argued that 'Western philosophers, grounded in patriarchal tradition, neglect dance because dance has its origins in the mythological female principle' (Levin, 1983b: 87 cited in Fraleigh, 1987: xxx). Levin's quote appears in his essay 'Philosophers and Dance' (1977). However, in

Levin's 'Balanchine's Formalism' (1973), which is published alongside his aforementioned essay in the reader *What is Dance?*, he seemed to state that Balanchine's ballets move beyond the 'female mythological principle' by virtue of its formalism:

> timelessness of Balanchine's miraculous art amounts to this: that he found the possibility of drama in a ballet form, which lets the semantical transparencies of modernism articulate, or heighten, the innermost syntactical measures of classicism.
>
> (Levin, 1983a: 124)

Levin's theorisation of Balanchine's ballets as logical (read male) and, perhaps by extension, worthy of academic philosopher's considerations can be construed as a gendered analysis. It is a point that the male ballet apologists Volynsky, Schlemmer and Kirstein made, as will be discussed in chapters 3 to 5, and it is a point, as mentioned, more recently forwarded by the ballet scholar Jennifer Homans (2010). In her large-scale narrative of ballet's history, she begins with and then reiterates a story in which ballet's mythos is described as descending not from a mythological female but from a mythological male—Apollo (Homans, 2010: xxi-xxii, 10, 12, 138, 275). As will be discussed in the next chapters, the notion of ballet, logic and maleness, as related to the Apollonian, is often part of a coded conversation about the art form. To return to Fraleigh, she perceived modern dance as rebellious, female and Dionysian, a perspective that has been passed down from Duncan to Wigman, and reiterated through second, third and fourth generation American modern dancers, like herself. The fact that Fraleigh identified Nietzsche as the philosopher of modern dance in her text is historically consistent with her phenomenological formation. In the last pages of her book, Fraleigh passionately

asserted her perspective on the value of modern dance in *Dance and the Lived Body:*

> Modern dance, in its existentially open aesthetic, founded in a search for a grace in accord with nature, a grace imperiled in the West through its exploitation of the earth and its devaluation of the incarnate body and the uncontentious transport of the earth goddess, honoring embattled heroic gods instead. Modern dance has sounded out the dark yet diaphanous earth divinity […] in its grace as Dionysus, the enigmatic earth dancer of the Greek godhead, whom Nietzsche addressed as 'the concealed one'.
>
> (Fraleigh, 1987: 251)[29]

In this paragraph, Fraleigh moves beyond critical analysis and into the realm of spiritual treatise. Such is her excitement and passion for her subject, she speaks in the voice of the Dionysian.

As a theology scholar dedicated to writing about dance, Kimerer LaMothe also seems, like Fraleigh, to take on the style of the form she is describing. She posited in two essays (2003, 2005) and in *Nietzsche's Dancers: Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham, and the Revaluation of Christian Values* (2006) that modern dance is a spiritual practice. In her book focussed on Duncan and Graham, LaMothe contended that Nietzsche's disavowal of Christianity provided a means by which both female artists constructed a spiritual dance philosophy, liberated from Christian theology. Duncan and Graham, LaMothe explains,

> embraced Nietzsche as a philosopher of dance, and found in his work resources for resisting the hostility to their work they experienced from representatives of Christian mythology, morality and tradition.
>
> (LaMothe, 2006: 7)

[29] Fraleigh quotes Nietzsche's statement, number 195, in the section titled 'What is Noble' from *Beyond Good and Evil* (2008).

As with Fraleigh, LaMothe identifies as a modern dancer, thus substantiating her embodied knowledge of the dance movement associated with Duncan and Graham (LaMothe, 2006: xi). Additionally, LaMothe's writings on Nietzsche and dance, as with Fraleigh's, are only concerned with the philosopher's impact on twentieth-century modern dance. That said, LaMothe considered, albeit briefly, the purported impact of Nietzsche on ballet. 'It is hard to imagine', she wrote, 'that Nietzsche's repeated references to light feet and the spirit of gravity were not influenced by the aesthetics of classical ballet' (LaMothe, 2006: 21). Then, immediately after, LaMothe posited that Nietzsche likely would have been repelled by French Romantic and Russian Imperial ballets, with their 'heady mix of sensuality, or oriental exoticism, and bourgeois morality' (LaMothe, 2006: 20). This presumption of what Nietzsche felt about 'classical' ballets, none of which she names, corresponds to her later statement, that 'Decadence, for Nietzsche, involves, among other things, using sensuality to support Christian morality rather than oppose it' (LaMothe, 2006: 210). Decadence, in other words, is for Nietzsche not only a word to express his negative attitude about Christianity, it is also, LaMothe intimated, a word to express his purported disdain for nineteenth-century ballet with its 'heady mix of sensuality' (LaMothe, 2006: 20). What is odd about LaMothe's evaluation of ballet in respect to Nietzsche is that she did not consider modernist twentieth-century ballets that were created during the lifetimes of Duncan and Graham, whose dances spanned from the 1900s to the 1980s, and who are the focus of her book. Many ballets made in this era also rejected decadence by satirising or undermining bourgeois sentimentality and sensuality. Such was the case with Michel Fokine's

Petrushka (1911), Vaslav Nijinsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* (1912), Bronislava Nijinsky's *Les Noces* (1923), George Balanchine's *Agon* (1957) and Frederick Ashton's *Monotones* (1965). Moreover, none of these twentieth-century ballet works championed or upheld the Christian morality which Nietzsche clearly disdained.

Though LaMothe seems to be prejudiced against ballet, her thoroughgoing discussion of Nietzsche and modern dance provides an important foundation for my research and analysis developed in this thesis. As LaMothe expertly argued, Nietzsche provided Duncan and Graham with a rousing social-spiritual language that critiqued bourgeois mores. 'They', wrote Lamothe,

> interpreted Nietzsche's references to dance as relevant to what they were doing in their attempt to invent new forms of dance practice and performance.
>
> (LaMothe, 2006: 7)

Moreover, LaMothe's thesis that modern dance is an evolving spiritual practice grounded in Nietzsche's Dionysian formulation, and Zarathustra's privileging of the body, is borne out by the way in which modern dance leaders speak about their art form today. For example, the former principal Graham dancer Terese Capucilli, who teaches at The Juilliard School, recently described the Graham floor series as a 'spiritual journey' that connects 'the self with the universal' (Capucilli, 2016a, 2016b). Capucilli, whose language stems from her mentor Graham, sounds like Zarathustra's. LaMothe's writings on Nietzsche and modern dance have been embraced by the Duncan master teacher Lori Belilove. In May 2016, Belilove and The Nietzsche Circle of New York City invited LaMothe to be the keynote speaker of

their event titled, 'An Affirmation of Life: Friedrich Nietzsche, Isadora Duncan, and the Making of Modern Dance' (Cooper, 2016). LaMothe's talk, which I attended, included her free-form barefoot dancing, which could be seen as an homage to Duncan's interpretive dancing, as well as her musings about dance in relationship to her communal life in rural Vermont. That night LaMothe, as was clearly her intention, became a performance artist of Nietzschean-Duncan values.

The discussions about Nietzsche's influence on dance have been further developed in the dance texts of Ernestine Stodelle (1978) and Arabella Stanger (2010). Yet in contrast to LaMothe and Fraleigh's panegyrics, these dance scholars described in their texts the balancing of Nietzsche's Dionysian and Apollonian aesthetics in the works of choreographers. In Stodelle's *The Dance Technique of Doris Humphrey and its Creative Potential* (1978), the former Humphrey company member argued that Humphrey's choreographer was essentially Nietzschean because her dance works and technique created an Apollonian-Dionysian interstitiality. For example, Stodelle explained that Humphrey's *Dionysiaques* (1932) announced a pivotal moment for the choreographer in that the dance embodied Nietzsche's aesthetics:

> Philosophically, Dionsiaques expressed the eternal conflict and resolution of the Apollonian-Dionysian element in man, a psychological counterpoint described by Friedrich Nietzsche in his Birth of Tragedy. Technically, Dionysiaques used balance and imbalance, the elements of Doris's principle of Fall and Recovery, as later formulated in 'The Arc Between Two Deaths'.
> (Stodelle, 1978: 9)[30]

[30] Humphrey's *Dionysiaques* (1932) is based on an ancient Cretan rite in which the lead priestess is sacrificed to the Bull God.

Stodelle then stated that this dance work was 'prophetic' in that it provided the 'ground work for 'the new approach' that Doris was groping for: one that would satisfy both her philosophy and technique (Stodelle, 1978: 9). Humphrey's dance technique, Stodelle explained, articulated the Dionysian as 'the precarious state of off-balance motion' and articulated the Apollonian as 'the security of the symmetrical balance' (Stodelle, 1978: 15). In sum, the body falling through space is Dionysian and the body recovering from being off balance is the Apollonian. Stodelle described this dynamic harmony as 'the oscillation of organic matter' (Stodelle, 1978: 15).

What is fascinating, and also confounding, about Stodelle's reiteration of Nietzschean aesthetics as articulated in Humphrey's discussion of her technique is how it overlooked the dark side of the philosopher's formulations. 'The Dionysian and Apollonian', wrote Humphrey, 'are different names for the will to grow and the will to balance' (Humphrey and Wentink, 1974, cited in Stodelle, 1978: 15). Nietzsche would hardly have agreed that the Dionysian fundamentally represents optimistic progress while the Apollonian represents a willed, yet harmless, stability. Unlike Duncan, Wigman and Graham, Humphrey's modern dance philosophy was ecumenically Nietzschean, or Nietzsche light.

Twenty-two years after Stodelle's monograph on Humphrey, the dance scholar Arabella Stanger (2010) carried out an aesthetic project similar to Stodelle's, but with two salient differences. This first difference between their projects is partially

explained by the fact that Stodelle was a modern dancer, and thus wrote about her mentor Humphrey, while the English-born Stanger came to dance through ballet and consequently focussed her Nietzsche-related study on two European leaders of contemporary ballet. The second difference is that Stanger's theoretical analysis is executed with a far greater degree of sophistication, in part, because of her understanding of Nietzsche's ideas. In 'Striking a Balance: The Apolline and Dionysiac in Contemporary Classical Choreography' (2010), Stanger considered Nietzsche's influence on post-modern ballet choreographers in the wake of the neoclassical movement forged by Balanchine. Stanger's essay is shaped by two case studies, Michael Clark's *Stravinsky Projects* (1992-1994) and William Forsythe's *Eidos: Telos* (1995). These works, she theorised, realise 'a transformation of the Apolline form of classical ballet into a site for choreography of the Dionysiac condition' (Stanger, 2010: 366). Stanger substantiated her claim by explaining that Clark's work eroticises, and thus performs a Dionysian treatment, on the source of his work's inspiration—Balanchine's neoclassical masterwork *Apollo*. Stanger then explained how Forsythe's ballet, from the same period as Clark's, takes ballet's formal (Apollonian) language of the *danse d'école* on a chaotic (Dionysian) journey by performing a '*spargamos*' on classical ballet's aesthetics of harmony, balance and symmetry. 'Spargamos', wrote Stanger, 'is the ancient cultic technique of tearing the sacrificial victim's body apart' (Stanger, 2010: fn. 69). Stanger's theory of the violent infusion of Dionysian aesthetics upon Apollonian ballet 'classicism' in the works of Clark and Forsythe is drawn from literary scholar Terry Eagleton's analysis of Nietzsche's impact on postmodernism (Eagleton, 2003). Postmodern

artwork, Eagleton contended, can be understood as a Dionysian 'syndrome which has reemerged'; in other words, it can be understood as a being 'Nietzsche without fully knowing' (Eagleton, 2003: 53). Eagleton also argued that postmodernity is intrinsically linked with deconstructionism, which has its roots in Dionysian aesthetics and in Nietzsche's influence on Derrida. This impulse, explained Stanger, is operationalised in Clark and Forsythe's ballets. The choreographers deconstruct ballet's formal language through a Dionysian project that warps its vocabulary and its aesthetics of restraint.

In the next three chapters, ideas originated from perceptions and assumptions about Nietzsche and dance made by scholars from previous chapters are further developed. The following work does not examine postmodernity. It concerns modernism in light of the antagonism between ballet and modern dance figures, namely Duncan, Volynsky, Schlemmer, Wigman, Martin and Kirstein, who articulated the value of their artform through Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian formulations, with their gendered inferences. The following investigation will be carried out through a deep reading of texts, produced by these six dance figures, who worked during the emergence of the modern dance and neoclassical ballet movements and who dedicated themselves to developing them.

Chapter 3

Two Readings of
The Birth of Tragedy:
Isadora Duncan (1877-1927)
and Akim Volynsky (1865-1926)

3.1 Introduction

Of all the dance figures under study, the writings of the early modern dancer Isadora Duncan have a distinctly Dionysian aesthetic orientation, while the writings of the ballet theorist Akim Volynsky have a markedly Apollonian aesthetic orientation. This chapter is devoted to tracing their polemical uses of the Dionysian and the Apollonian. It will be shown how Nietzsche's binary concepts provided Duncan and Volynsky with an inspirational discourse to not only articulate their respective dance genres but also to shape their identities. Though scholars have noted how Dionysian values had a profound impact on the movement philosophy of Duncan (Daly, 2002; LaMothe, 2006; Ragona, 1994) and how Apollonian values impacted Volynsky's aesthetic (Rabinowitz, 2008; Tolstoy, 2014, 2017), a comparative analysis of Volynsky and Duncan's strong tendency to uphold one value over the other has never been undertaken. Since both worked in the same time period, used Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian terms continuously, and since Volynsky wrote about Duncan, and Duncan lived for a time in Russia, they are provocative figures of comparison.

Duncan's key role in the creation of modern dance as a cultural movement has been remarked upon often (Kant, 2007: 275; Preston-Dunlop, 2014: 130; Thomas, 1995: 61-72). Volynsky has been described as 'Russia's leading ballet critic', between 1911 and 1927, and Russia's 'most erudite and influential humanist scholar and critic of

the late nineteenth to early twentieth century' (Gaevskii, 1992: 15, cited in Rabinowitz, 1996: 3; Rabinowitz, 2008: xvii). According to the Volynsky scholar Stanley Rabinowitz, 'His last published work, *Kniga likovanii: Azbuka klassicheskogo tantsa/The Book of Exultations* (1925), establishes Volynsky as one of the most important ballet critics of the twentieth century' (Rabinowitz, 1991: 307). Because Volynsky argued that ballet's lexicon originated in Ancient Greek aesthetic forms, in sculpture, painting, theatre and literature, he has been considered 'the first formalist dance critic' (Zarhina, 2010: 40). Volynsky's essays promulgate the immutability of ballet's moral and spiritual cultural superiority, originating in Hellenic patriarchal culture (Rabinowitz, 1991: 305). In contrast, Duncan's writings promulgate her dances as being moral and spiritual harbingers of change, especially for the modern woman (Daly, 2002). Duncan's writing attests to a feminist worldview, but not a universalist one. She did nothing to dismantle racial biases. Instead she reasserted them by positioning her movement style against the African-American cultural movements of jazz dance and music (Duncan, 2013: 305-306).

Duncan's and Volynsky's appropriation of Nietzsche's central theory in *BOT* was piecemeal: they elevated one term to the negligence, or debasement, of the other. Nietzsche sought to 'reevaluate' (his key term) the whole of Western culture and civilization from its foundations in Ancient Greece, beginning with the dramas of Euripides as influenced by Socrates (LaMothe, 2006: 79; Von Tevenar, 2013: 294). Arguing that the balance between Apollonian and Dionysian energies had been upset and even destroyed in Euripidean drama, Nietzsche perceived the origins of

modernity's aesthetic and social crisis in the Socratic turn toward rationality and the rejection of strong feeling (Nietzsche, 1999: 59). Nietzsche called upon the rebalancing of Apollonian and Dionysian aesthetics in Western culture and art. Duncan's and Volynsky's oppositional readings of Nietzsche led them to describe modernity's aesthetic crisis differently: as a result of a world being not Dionysian or not Apollonian enough. What each choreographer took from Nietzsche's philosophy was the impetus to re-evaluate dance as a means to transform culture, to strengthen and to promulgate its power and meaning.

3.2 *Fin de Siècle* Nietzsche Reception: Central Europe, Russia, U.S.A.

By the turn of the twentieth century, scores of artists, intellectuals and young people were embracing Nietzsche as one of their own (Aschheim, 1992: 29, 36,37; Rosenthal, 1986: 10; Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012). According to Oswald Spengler in *The Decline of the West* (1918), and Jürgen Habermas in 'The Entry into Postmodernity: Nietzsche' (Habermas, 1987: 97), Nietzsche's ideas resonated with the *fin de siècle* crisis regarding Enlightenment values. According to the Nietzsche scholars Steven Aschheim, Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen and Bernice Rosenthal, turn of the twentieth-century central European, North American and Russian readers found in Nietzsche's scepticism about progress through industrialisation, and the notion of inherent human rationality, a discerning voice. The philosopher spoke to these readers' anxieties; he galvanized them to imagine a future

predicated on change through a re-evaluation of values. Among those incorporating Nietzsche's central thesis in *BOT* were the symbolist writers Maxim

Gorky (1868-1936) and Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), as well as the symbolist painters Gustav Klimt (1862- 1918), Edvard Munch (1863-1944), and Mikhail Vrubel (1856-1910), to name a few.[31] In Vienna, for example, Gustav Klimt's renowned 'gold period' was preceded, according to the modernist art historian Jennifer Florman, by a large-scale work for the Vienna Burgtheater in which 'there seems to be a clear reference to Nietzsche's assertion that tragedy was born from the combined powers of the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus' (Florman, 1990: 315). In Germany, Nietzsche's public relevance developed through specific publications, such as Richard Krummel's *Nietzsche und der deutsche Geiste* (1918), an encyclopaedic compilation dedicated to Nietzsche's reception in Germany from 1901 to 1918 (Aschheim, 1992: 19). The philosopher's terms and characters entered the ephemera of everyday life: in newspapers and plays, in sayings and letters (Aschheim, 1992: 24). For example, Maximilian Harden, editor of *Die Zukunft*, writing to a friend in the 1890s, described his winning tennis game as 'Thus played Zarathustra!' (Aschheim, 1992: 30).

[31] For a discussion on Nietzsche's influence on Gorky and Chekhov see Bernice Rosenthal's *Nietzsche in Russia* (1986), on Gustav Klimt see Jennifer Florman (1990), on Munch see Pablo Arruda De Menezes (1993) and on Vrubel, and Stravinsky, see Mazour-Matusevich (2009:4). The Nietzsche scholar Douglas Smith argues that 'music was central to the Symbolist movement, its status epitomized by Walter Pater's celebrated declaration of 1873 that "all art aspires to the condition of music"' (Nietzsche and Smith, 2000: viii).

In the United States, the book that triggered the popular reception of Nietzsche was H.L. Mencken's *Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche* (1908), a eulogistic part-biography, part-analysis of the philosopher's works. In the number of book prints, Mencken's followed in popularity only behind publications by Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Aldous Huxley (Daly, 2002: fn. 35). Paving the way for American curiosity about Nietzsche was Hungarian sociologist Max Nordau's presentation of Nietzsche as a mad genius (his book *Degeneration* was translated into English in 1895). Subsequently, a Nietzsche 'vogue' developed around the evolving discourse about the ills of modernity (Hartman, 2013: 122; Ratner- Rosenhagen, 2012: 45-51). In 1899, a writer from the American philosophy journal *The Monist* wrote, 'he who will know the *Zeitgeist* will know Nietzsche' (Ratner- Rosenhagen, 2012: 197).

In Russia the enthusiastic reception of Nietzsche can be traced through literary texts, as attested by the following examples put forward by Nietzsche scholars. Maxim Gorky's late nineteenth-century short stories, wrote Rosenthal, 'tended to contrast Dionysian madness with Apollonian rationality' (Rosenthal, 1986: 14). George Kline, the late scholar of Russian philosophy, posited that in Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904), Nietzsche becomes the butt of a joke. Kline cited the passage in the play in which the landowner character defends himself by explaining that it was the German philosopher who advocated the counterfeiting of money. The response to his outlandish statement is a blasé one: 'Oh, so you've read Nietzsche' (Kline cited in Rosenthal, 1986: xvi). The comparative literature

scholar Mary Ann Frese Witt contended that Nietzsche's popularity in Russia began in the 1890s, with the intelligentsia's reading of *BOT* in German (Witt, 2007: 127). Rosenthal explained why Nietzsche was popular, asserting in her edited volume *Nietzsche in Russia* that the German author became 'a philosopher for rebels' (Rosenthal 1986: 3). Nietzsche's call for 'the revaluation of values' (*pereotsenka vsekh tsennostei*) actually became a Russian catch phrase, so much so, Rosenthal explained, that writers often used Nietzsche's saying without quotation marks and without knowing its origin (Rosenthal 1986: 8).

Nietzsche's popularity also demonstrated itself through the sheer number of Russian translations of and Russian-written critical essays about the philosopher. They were overwhelmingly published between 1892 to 1912, according to the social scientist Richard B. Davies (Rosenthal, 1986: 357-387). Apparently, 1899 was a key year for the German philosopher in Russia because of N.N. Polilov's Russian translation of Nietzsche's *BOT* (Witt, 2007: 127). Nietzschean enthusiasm began to dissipate with Russia's increasing political and economic instability. In 1905, following Bloody Sunday, the Bolshevik's splintered into violent fringe groups. in 1912, hundreds of striking miners were massacred at the Lena goldfields. During the first six months of 1914, almost half of Russia's total industrial workforce carried out strikes (Haimson, 2005). Unsurprisingly, Nietzsche's call to counteract the forces of rationality with Dionysian rebelliousness was seen as divisive. No better example of the demotion of the Dionysian came with the founding in 1909 of *Apollon*, the Russian journal that

> emphasized form rather than flux, clarity rather than mystification, the concrete rather than the elusive: in other words, the Apollonian principle of form, clarity, and discreteness.
>
> (Rosenthal, 1986: 29-30)

By 1925 Nietzsche was denounced in official circles as a decadent with politically dangerous ideas. The wholesale removal of the philosopher's works from trade union halls to university libraries coincided with Stalin's rise to power (Rosenthal, 1986: 34). The Russian patriot Akim Volynsky and the European-based American Isadora Duncan developed their aesthetic orientations during this period of intensive discovery and consideration of Nietzsche's works. Despite their employment of Nietzsche's ideas for radically different ends, Duncan and Volynsky found common ground in Nietzsche's belief that 'cultural creativity' would advance society (Kline cited in Rosenthal, 1986: xiii).

3.3 A Differing Reading of *The Birth of Tragedy*: Duncan and Volynsky

BOT was extremely valuable for Volynsky and Duncan. Nietzsche intertwined sociological insight and mysticism through a narrative in which the Apollonian hero's hopeless attempts to impose a rational will on the chaotic Dionysian reality of fate is evaluated by the dancing chorus. Nietzsche's central argument concerned the duelling forces of the Apollonian and Dionysian and their harmonisation in early Greek plays through the hubristic individual's tragic fate, the dancing chorus's perception of this impending chaos, and the spectator's catharsis while witnessing the unfolding of these events. Duncan and Volynsky's involvement with the philosopher's ideas in respect to dance were without precedent. Yet their

Nietzschean entry points for explicating dance were not through the above-described harmonisation of Apollonian and the Dionysian values. Rather it was inspired through Nietzsche's minimal references to dance in *BOT*, and through his later writings. In *Gay Science* (1882), Nietzsche wrote, 'When one had lost the proper tension and harmony of the soul, one had to dance to the beat of the singer—that was the recipe of this medical art' (Nietzsche, 2001: 59). As testified by their writings, Nietzsche's dance-oriented language fired their imaginations. For each of them the Apollonian and the Dionysian were not just aesthetic formulations. They were metaphors for their social-political situations.

Volynsky lived through the uncertain aftermath of Bloody Sunday (1905) and the turmoil of the Russian Revolution (1917). The dance writer's admiration for Marius Petipa's choreography, with its symmetrical and hierarchically arranged configurations of corps surrounding the principal dancers, sharply contrasted with the chaotic life found on Petrograd's post-revolutionary streets. Order is an Apollonian value and Volynsky praised it in dance (Volynsky, 2008: 4-5). Duncan, in contrast, primarily identified with Dionysus, the outsider and rebel god. In rebellion against Victorian sexual mores, Duncan (2013: 163) bore children out of wedlock, criticised marriage, and performed in a Grecian toga, which the Duncan scholar Elizabeth Francis described as 'an emblem of women's emancipation, a radical performance of woman's body freed from the binding and stifling layers of culture' (Francis, 1994: 26). Toward the end of Duncan's autobiography *My Life* (1927) comes this sociological statement: 'Nietzsche says, "Woman is a mirror," and I have

only reflected and reacted to the people and forces that have seized me' (Duncan, 2013: 289). Dispensing with the ballet barre, the mirror, and the prince consort, Duncan reflected a new vision of the female dancing body. Volynsky's writing, in contrast, underscored the values of tradition and stability. Before the Russian Revolution and before Volynsky began writing about dance, he penned 'Apollo and Dionysus' (1896), urging his readers that 'the time of bacchanalian ecstasy, wild and dark, had passed. The future would belong to enlighted (sic), contemplative aesthetics' (Tolstoy, 2017: 70-71). These aesthetics, particularly when Volynsky begam writing about ballet, would be associated with the Apollonian.

3.4 A Significant Pair of Oppositions

In the first chapter of Duncan's autobiography *My Life*, she explained to the reader the origin of her dancing: 'I have discovered the art which has been lost for two-thousand years' (Duncan, 2013: 21). We then learn that in the midst of successfully auditioning for the American theatrical producer Augustin Daly, Duncan stated, à la Nietzsche, that her dance and 'the art of the dance—the tragic chorus' is one and the same (Duncan, 2013: 21). The Duncan scholar Ann Daly wagered that it was not Nietzsche, but Duncan's Delsarte studies that inspired her to consider her work as originating out of Ancient Greece (Daly, 2002: 121-133). Duncan, a San Francisco native, must have been aware of Genevieve Stebbins (1857-1934), who was also born in San Francisco and was popularising and developing the theories of François Delsarte (1811-1871), the French actor-singer. He had developed a vocal training

technique based on an understanding of the whole body's functioning. The connection between the idea of Ancient Greek dance and Stebbins is elaborated upon by the dance scholar Nancy Ruyter. Stebbins 'used pictures of classical Greek sculpture to illustrate principles of expression' (Ruyter, 1996: 69). Of additional note is that in Stebbins's *Delsarte System of Expression* (1892), she 'differentiated her work from the ballet tradition and identified it with the kinds of expressive movement that she felt existed in the sacred dances of Asia and ancient Greece' (Ruyter, 1998). Duncan's notion that her original, expressive dance was rooted in ancient Greek dance seems to owe a significant debt to Stebbins.

Duncan never finished secondary school (Kurth, 2001: 19), and it likely troubled her. Thus, in *My Life* she emphasised her autodidacticism. At the Paris Opera library, circa 1901, Duncan explained,

> I applied myself to the task of reading everything that had ever been written on the Art of Dancing, when I had finished the colossal experiment, I realized that the only dance masters I could have were Jean-Jacques Rousseau ("Emile"), Walt Whitman, and Nietzsche.
>
> (Duncan, 2013: 65)

Duncan's preference for these iconoclastic writers helped her to instantiate her negation of the academic ballet tradition, forged through the ballet master, the conservatory, and the technical manual. Duncan's designated masters were three interdisciplinarians who had successfully railed against sanctioned modes of thinking. Whitman and Nietzsche were creative rebels, as she sought to be. The year Nietzsche died, the 23-year-old Duncan performed *Dance Idylls* (1900) in London. Jane Ellen Harrison, the Cambridge University archaeologist and classicist,

who described herself as a 'disciple of Nietzsche,' accompanied Duncan's dancing by reading aloud *Idylls*, as purportedly written by Theocritus (Carpentier, 1998: 4; Di-Donato, 2009: 34-35). It is likely, hypothesised Duncan scholar Andrea Berger Di-Donato, that Harrison also introduced Duncan to *BOT* (Di-Donato, 2009: 34-35).

In January 1903, Duncan's knowledge of Nietzsche was deepened through her relationship to the Austrian scholar Karl Federn, who translated for her some of Nietzsche's texts. 'Nietzsche's philosophy ravished my being,' the dancer wrote (Duncan, 2013: 121). According to Daly, Federn's Nietzsche sessions with Duncan in Berlin 'converted Duncan from the Apollonian to the Dionysian' (Daly, 2002: 94). Ostensibly, her dancing, as perceived by critics (to be discussed below), became more fervent and less serene. What had begun as a forging of a mythological identity now became a conscious mode, a dance philosophy. The Federn-Duncan reading sessions of Nietzsche culminated with Duncan's essay 'Dance of the Future', which Federn published in Germany in March 1903, and which immediately followed Duncan's speech of the same name to the Berlin Press Club (Frankenbach, 2017: 76). Duncan's Nietzschean-influenced manifesto concludes with this feminist statement of solidarity:

> From all parts of her body shall shine radiant intelligence, bringing to the world the message of the thoughts and aspirations of thousands of women. She shall dance the freedom of women.
>
> (Duncan, 2014: 168)

In the Duncan-Federn essay, allusions to Dionysian values, such as the communal, ecstatic and chaotic, abound. The essay boldly states that dance's future would

involve the communal participation of 'thousands of women', celebrate women's ecstatic 'radiant intelligence', and would bring 'freedom', ostensibly through the chaotic process of rejecting tradition. Though the essay does not explain what this 'dance' of the 'freedom of women' would look like, in the preceding sentence it clarifies what it would not look like: 'She will dance not in the form of a nymph, nor fairy, nor coquette' (Duncan, 2014: 168). In other words, the dancer of the future would not reconstitute the traditional roles then available to women in ballet productions and theatrical revues. In her first published essay, Duncan articulated her dance values through Nietzsche's Dionysian framework: dance, according to Duncan, was to be communal, ecstatic, and rebellious. This new form of dance was expressly conceived by Duncan as a thwarting of patriarchal power.

Duncan achieved her first critical success for her solo dancing in Hungary in 1902 (O'Connor, 2001: 33) and then in Germany (Frankenbach, 2017; Duncan, 2013: 82, 156). But in 1903, Duncan abandoned the European stage. During that year, she travelled to Greece with her mother and brother aboard a cattle ship. Duncan perceived herself on a pilgrimage to the birthplace of Ancient Greek tragedy. Dancing alone at dawn inside of the Theatre of Dionysus, at the Acropolis, she later recollected her epiphany:

> Suddenly it seemed to me as if all our dreams burst like a glorious bubble, and we were not, nor ever could be, other than moderns. We could not have the feeling of ancient Greeks
>
> (Duncan, 2013: 114)

When Duncan returned to Germany in 1904, it was with the acknowledgement that Ancient Greece was an abstract concept to further her aesthetic, one that sought renovated interpretations of the past. This sentiment was echoed in 15 March 1904 article, written by an unnamed staff writer for the *Münchner Neueste Nachristen*. Praising Duncan's innovative choreography to the two middle movements of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, the journalist wrote that she produced

> probably the most complete, beautiful, and poignant dance she has ever given… The dancer deserves our highest admiration for her understanding of the Dionysian spirit…and for applying it to the field of plastic movement without harming Beethoven's genius.
>
> (Frankenbach, 2017: 110)

The journalist's identification of her 'Dionysian spirit' is worth noting because it reveals how commonplace Nietzsche's terminology had become, and because the writer chose Dionysian as a signifier for good dancing. Compared to France and Russia, which had stronger ballet traditions, this German critic did not compare Duncan's dance to ballet. That served Duncan, who wanted to be perceived as making her own traditions. With Germany's embrace of Duncan, she established her first barefoot dance school in 1904 at Grünewald, outside of Berlin. It, like the German culture at large, emphasised the value of physical health and being outdoors. Duncan's privately-funded school for girls offered free instruction, and free room and board for students whose parents had little means (Kurth, 2002: 55). Duncan's educational project became so well-known it inspired a parodic song called *Hozaktion*:

> In Grunewald, in Grunewald is dance class! / Bare knees, naked calves / and armpits exposed; Our classical maenads / Are dancing today in the *Hundekehle* [dog's throat]. / Did they know much of Orpheus, / Who to the

> maenads fell prey? —/Gluck and other composers / Are no more better off today.
>
> (Brandstetter and Polzer, 2015: 158)

Not only does this song pay homage to Duncan's style, it also treats her aesthetic in relations to a specific Ancient Greek myth involving the Greek legend of Orpheus, known as the son of Apollo and his guiding protector, who he is torn to pieces by the Maenads. The writer of this song intimated that Duncan's all-girl school was not in the service of privileging male voices in the mode of Gluck. The school was, like the Ancient Greek female ritual cult, politically subversive.

The same year Duncan opened her Grünewald school, she performed and choreographed the *Bacchanal* dance in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* under the supervision of Wagner's widow Cosima. While discussing her vision for Duncan's dance, Cosima also purportedly expressed to Duncan her distaste towards ballet.[32] Duncan, who was then living on the Wagner estate, likely riffled through Wagner's autobiography *My Life,* which was proofread in 1880 by Nietzsche (Köhler, 1998: 63). Correspondingly, Duncan's autobiography is also called *My Life*. Far from a factually accurate rendering of her experiences, Duncan's book can be read as a manifesto in which, as a dancer and a woman, she takes on the establishment; and, like Nietzsche, she argued for the social utility of art (Thomas, 1995: 67). As with Nietzsche, who moved well beyond his expertise in philology, Duncan sought

[32] Duncan (2013: 122) wrote in her autobiography about Cosima Wagner, 'and then she spoke to me of Richard Wagner's distaste of the ballet school of dancing and costume; of his dream for the bacchanal and the flower maidens… then she asked me to dance in the performances of Tannhauser'.

to surpass the popular moniker of a female barefoot dancer. The text *Isadora Speaks* asserted this self-proclamation: 'I am not a dancer,' Duncan said, 'What I am interested in is finding and expressing a new form of life' (Duncan cited in Koritz, 1995: 49; Duncan, 1981).

In 1908, with the establishment of her second school in Bellevue, France, Duncan told the *New York Sun* that her students would 'become the nucleus of the great dancing chorus' (Daly, 2002: 145). Shedding her identity as the young bohemian rebel, Duncan was inventing a new role, as a dancing matriarch in charge of a female-driven movement. While in the early part of Duncan's autobiography, she expressed her disdain for institutional education, in the latter part of actual her life, she founded dance institutions. With Duncan's third school—established in Moscow in 1921 and directed by Irma Duncan, one of her adopted German students—her most fertile ideological pollination occurred. According to Russian historians Irina Sirotkina and Roger Smith, Duncan's dancing resonated with the aspirations of Soviet Russian intellectuals because they perceived in the American dancer their own buried roots, which were Slavic as opposed to those forwarded by Peter the Great, who sought to make St. Petersburg the Paris of the east, in part by privileging ballet. Sirotkina and Smith explained how, inspired by Duncan,

> intellectuals turned to free dance as a new religion. Abandoning ballet and ball dances, the highly rule-bound disciplines of movement enjoyed by the social establishment, they were inspired by Dionysian dance. In the Russian language, there are two different words for dance: one, *tanets*, derived from

> the Russian *Tanz*, is for a formalized, controlled way of dancing; the other, *plyska*, denotes a free and exuberant dance coming from the individual creative soul. *Plyaska*, in addition, connotes the dance of a soul of Russia character, as famously, in the scene where Tolstoy, in *War and Peace*, portrayed Natasha dancing after the day's hunting.
>
> (Sirotkina and Smith, 2017: 45)

In Tolstoy's famous scene, the aristocrat Natasha improvises a free dance in a rustic cabin. Her audience is peasants. Outside the etiquette-bound society of the Tsarist courts, Natasha connects with her Russian soul. Duncan, it could be said, became for a period of time the real-life, unfettered Natasha of Tolstoy's fiction.

Duncan's Dionysian approach to the dancing body is further illuminated by considering Akim Volynsky's no less successful and imaginative efforts. While Duncan wedded a Dionysian ideology to her dance, Akim Volynsky's employed an Apollonian language to articulate a neoclassical re-evaluation of Russian ballet. Yet before the two dance figures began employing Nietzsche's aesthetic concepts, they shared other commonalities. Duncan was born and raised in provincial, late nineteenth-century San Francisco; partially because of her father's absence, both physically and financially, Duncan's mother encouraged her to perceive herself, along with her siblings, as a working artist (Manning, 1998); she found artistic acknowledgement far afield, in European and Russian-Soviet capitals, where she became known for her outspoken and flamboyant persona. In the same era, Akim Volynsky, born Chaim Leib Flekser, spent his early years in the small town of Zhitomir, Ukraine; he deprecatingly described his father, a travelling salesman, as a 'rolling stone' (Rabinowitz, 1991: 291). A precocious student, Volynsky left his

hometown in 1879 at age 15 with his mother, who had separated from her husband and left behind her Jewish faith; she associated both, explained the Volynsky scholar Helen Tolstoy, with the 'sorrows' of married life (Tolstoy, 2017: 10). After studying at a prestigious gymnasium, Volynsky earned a law degree at the University of St. Petersburg. The monograph he wrote on the Jewish philosopher Spinoza earned praise from a law professor named Gradovsky, who hoped to treat Volynsky's work in lieu of a formal dissertation so that he could join the law faculty (Tolstoy, 2017: 19). It is known that Spinoza (1632-1677) opposed Descartes' theory of the mind-body separation, a view that would later inform Volynsky's dance writing (Tolstoy, 2014: 53). Yet Spinoza's call to separate religion and philosophy, argued Volynsky, was a grave error (Tolstoy, 2017: 15). The latter would become a point of view that would inform Volynsky's religious-oriented philosophical dance writing in the 1920s. Back in 1899, Volynsky declined the prestigious opportunity to teach, since it was contingent upon him being baptised and because he wished to further his intellectual curiosities, particularly in literature and the visual arts, through critical journalistic writing (Tolstoy, 2017: 19; Rabinowitz, 1991: 291-292).

Like Duncan, Volynsky was 'brash, arrogant, opinionated' and a 'cecessionist [sic] by nature' (Rabinowitz 1991: 290). Yet in contrast to Duncan, whose career and life continues to be the subject of numerous studies, Volynsky's creative output is less known and appreciated in the West. With the demise of the Soviet Union, however, the Russian literature scholar Stanley Rabinowitz began translating into English a significant body of Volynsky's writings on literature, painting and dance (Rabinowitz,

1991, 1996, 1997, 2008). More recently, the Jewish literary scholar Helen Tolstoy has shed important light on Volynsky's pervasive religious thinking (Tolstoy, 2017). She also underscored Volynsky's literary prodigiousness, and subsequent censorship by his government. While four of Volynsky's books were published, many more of his writings never reached a readership; they are now foundering in Russian archives (Tolstoy, 2017: 7).

Volynsky became a journalist and a literary critic in the same period that he began reading Nietzsche (Tolstoy 2017, 64). Yet unlike many of his Russian contemporaries, explained Tolstoy,

> Volynsky's key idea was that Nietzsche was wrong. Beginning in the mid-1890s, Volynsky attempted to find a counterweight to Nietzsche's "Dionysian" ecstasies in the new, "Apollonian," perfectly lucent ecstasies. He fought against all sorts of "Falls" and "falling away" into paganism, barbarianism, nationalism, conservatism.
>
> (Tolstoy, 2014: 54-55)

Volynsky expressed his opinions on society and culture in the influential St. Petersburg journal *Northern Herald* [*Severnyi Vestnik*], 'the first modernist literary journal in Russia', which he edited from 1891 to 1898 (Rabinowitz, 1991: 289; Tolstoy, 2017: 11). The first recorded instance of Volynsky's reading of Nietzsche came in the summer of 1892, when he and the polish aristocrat Dmitrii Merezhkovsky (1866-1941), a fellow literary critic and closest friend, read *Zarathustra* (Tolstoy, 2017: 64). At this time, Volynsky had exchanged his Jewish name for the Russian and Christian sounding one. Yet he never forsook religion. Writing to the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy in May 1894, he stated, 'My personal

understanding of life has no other content except religion' (Volynsky cited in Kotel'nikov, 1994: 40-43; Tolstoy, 2017: 30). Volynsky's religious fervour expressed itself through a dramatic and forceful prose style that, according to Rabinowitz, bore the influence of his Jewish Orthodox upbringing influenced by 'Old Testament moral severity and authoritarianism […] and a patriarchal, semantically certain quality' (Volynsky, 2008: xviii). Volynsky used this style in *The Northern Herald*, circa 1896, to demand that his readers reject politically-oriented aesthetics, arguing that they had no place in artistic expression (Rosenthal, 1986: 61-62). In 1899, he preached the life of Christ in his native synagogue, as a means to argue that the lives of Jews and Gentiles must be reconciled, instead of rendered apart by the politics of institutional religion (Tolstoy, 2017: 1).

Volynsky turned to dance as his religion after two decades of social and political ostracizations. In 1899, the year he offended Jews in his synagogue, he was ousted from his position at *The Northern Herald* because of his caustic attacks on materialists and symbolists (Tolstoy, 2014: 53; Rabinowitz, 1991: 299). He then travelled to Greece, where he lived with monks in a monastery on Mt. Athos and studied Orthodox mystical practices (Tolstoy, 2017: 40). Given his spiritual zeal, they could not understand why he refused to convert. Volynsky, explained Tolstoy, 'proclaimed the necessity of religion—a universal and eternal religion, able to save and re-create modern mankind', but he could 'not embrace a real-life religion' (Tolstoy, 2017: 48). Volynsky refused to became part of a known religion. He wanted to make one of his own. Between 1907 and 1922, explained Rabinowitz,

'No journal would publish him' and 'no new book of his appeared in print' (Rabinowitz, 1991: 290). Just before his exile from the Russian publishing and journalism community, Volynsky created 'his magnus opus on Russian literature', a series of essays on Fyodor Dostoevsky, which were published as a monograph in 1906 (Tolstoy, 2014: 53-54; Rabinowitz, 1991: 303, 304). The Russian novelist's impact on Nietzsche is well documented (see Love and Metzger, 2016). Significantly, Volynsky embraced Dostoevsky's 'profound disagreement' with the idea of Nietzsche's 'new man', who is able to transcend that which he has been given (Rabinowitz, 1991: 302). Volynsky's distaste for 'the new man' who renews or rebirths himself was most realised in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Volynsky projected Nietzsche's concept of 'the new man' onto the persona of Leonardo Da Vinci in his massive text *In Search of Leonardo* (1900). In it, Volynsky described the Renaissance artist as 'a great virtuoso spreading the poison of voluptuous demonism through his predatory genius' (Volynsky cited in Neginsky, 2010: 538; Volynsky, 1909: 43, 100). While contemporary scholars have enthusiastically discussed Da Vinci as a scientific innovator who advanced Ancient Greek ideas of proportion and perspective (Isaacson, 2017: 140-160), Volynsky, according to Rabinowitz, saw the 'artist as a proto-Nietzschean decadent whose brilliant paintings contain bisexual features' (Rabinowitz, 1996: 4). Volynsky's rejection of Dionysian aesthetics seemed to be associated with his distaste for the ambi-sexual and the overtly sensual.

A persona non grata in the world of literary and art criticism, Volynsky turned his energies to the theatre community. His written suggestion to Konstantin

Stanislavsky (1863-1938), head of the Moscow Art Theatre, that he serve as an artistic consultant went unanswered, but Vera Komissarzhevska (1864-1910) employed him (Tolstoy, 2017: 101, 108). An Imperial Theatre actress of great repute, Komissarzhevskaya hired Volynsky in the spring of 1905 to serve as her theatre's 'ideological and artistic director' (Tolstoy, 2017: 108). Volynsky not only directed 'a new anti-naturalistic interpretation of Ibsen's "Master Builder" that delighted many viewers', he also visited European capitals to study 'how to stage modern drama' (Fidler cited in Tolstoy, 2017: 109; Fidler, 2008: 669). According to the Ibsen scholar Frode Hellend, *The Master Builder* contains several allusions to Nietzsche which stand out so conspicuously that the text can be said to demand an examination of the link' (Helland, 2010: 50). It could be said Volynsky and Komissarzhevskaya found ground through the German philosopher. She too was 'fascinated by the works of Nietzsche' (Leach, 1999: 245).

Now part of the theatre community, Volynsky befriend in 1905 or 1906 the young actress Ida Rubinstein (1883-1960), who achieved renown as a *femme fatale* performer in the Ballets Russes and as a director of her own dance company (Tolstoy, 2017: 10; Mayer, 1998). With a shared interest in Ancient Greek culture,

> Volynsky conceived of the idea of exploring the ritual origins of Greek theater, namely the dithyrambic cult of Apollo. In summer of 1907 they visited Greece together, eager to "understand the relationship between Christian liturgy and Hellenic ecstasy." From these trips Volynsky brought back the conviction that authentic theater was a theater of dance.
>
> (Braude cited in Tolstoy, 2017: 110; Braude, 1926: 21)

Correspondingly, Rabinowitz emphasised that it was not just dance but ballet that

Volynsky perceived, during his four-month Greek trip, as a link to a spiritually valuable past: 'Volynsky came to the conviction that among the elements of theatrical spectacle, balletic dance alone preserved the character of the Hellenic sense of plastic art' (Rabinowitz in Volynsky, 2008, xxi). Rather than perceiving the female and male Hellenistic body, as was the case with Duncan, as muscular yet relaxed, sensual and also naked, Volynsky seemed to have drawn from Hellenic statuary, friezes and architecture another perspective, as articulated almost two decades later, in his 1923 ballet libretto, *The Birth of Apollo.* Volynsky intimated, in his never to be produced work, that ballet had its origin in a Platonised, Apollonian Ancient Greece. He also stated in his libretto that the male god Apollo and ballet are synonymous: 'The dance of Apollo places clearly before all the spectators' eyes the complete science and strict technique of classical dancing' (Volynsky, 2008: 79). By linking ballet technique to Apollo, as a way of underscoring that this art was a logical system of rules, Volynsky offered a way for ballet to untether its connection from its more obvious, and more historically accurate, connection to Renaissance and Baroque ballet, which was the service of performing a vision of aristocratic power, such as occurred with the spectacles produced by the Medici family (Hammond, 2015).

Like Nietzsche, Volynsky's interest in dance sprung from his research into Ancient Greek culture. In 1908, Volynsky became writing dance reviews and in 1910, he became the senior ballet critic of the 'prestigious' newspaper *Birzhevye vedomstii/The Stock Exchange*, where he became one if not the most incisive voices

for dance in Russia (Rabinowitz, 1996: 4-5). Until 1920, at which time the paper folded, Volynsky worked to show that 'the principles of balletic art were identical to those of choreographic movement on the ancient Greek stage' (Rabinowitz, 1991: 305). Volynsky's writings on dance (1907-1924) coincided with the death throes and demise of the Imperial Russian ballet. Marius Petipa, the Imperial theatre's chief choreographer, whom Volynsky greatly admired, was forcibly retired in 1908; he died two years later. In 1909, the impresario Serge Diaghilev began hiring many of the most promising dancers of the St. Petersburg Mariinsky Theatre to perform abroad. With the formation of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1909, the exodus of the soon-to-be internationally heralded Imperial Russian dancers—Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky, Tamara Karsavina—had begun. Volynsky railed against this development. The Mariinsky ballet's choreographic stagnation (Garafola, 1989: 6) coincided with Volynsky's decision to devote himself to writing about ballet. When he was nearing fifty years old, Volynsky perceived, as summarised by Tolstoy, that 'dance was in service to a higher principle, an upward surge, an attempt to re-create man by spirit rather than a healthy rebellion' (Tolstoy, 2017: 123; Volynsky, 2008: 84). In Russian ballet, Volynsky found an art form that continued to express tradition and decorum, and which he perceived as proper expression of spirituality. In his dance reviews, Volynsky devoted his attentions to Mariinsky loyalists, such as ballerinas Mathilde Kschessinskaya and Agrippina Vaganova, whom he applauded for their strong ballet technique. In the year 1911—when Michel Fokine's creations for the sensual and androgynous dancing of Vaslav Nijinsky astonished Paris—Volynsky decided not to see the work

for himself. In fact, he never travelled to witness the Ballets Russes. Instead Volynsky wrote admiringly of Russian's most stalwart ballerina Kschessinskaya. Like Volynsky, the Tsar Nicholas II's former mistress disdained the idea of expanding ballet, as Fokine had, through Duncanesque expressive, uncodified gesture and movement (Nelson, 1984: 4-5). As if defending Kschessinskaya's conservative aesthetics, Volynsky wrote, 'She is a more brilliant orator of choreographic ideas and forms than any artist in the direct and exact sense of the word' (Volynsky, 2008: 17). In this description, Volynsky suggested that Kschessinskaya's technically brilliant dancing gave her the ability to execute the most difficult choreographic language. Consequently, at least in Volynsky's estimation, her dancing became as forceful as a well-constructed argument. Given this allusion, Volynsky echoed Plato, who in *The Republic* (Book II) argued that oratory skills are a sign of man's logic. Yet Plato, as Nietzsche stated in *BOT,* also asserted that the arts were irrational and thus dangerous to society (Nietzsche, 1999: 64). This perception by Nietzsche about Plato was one that Volynsky would increasingly have to face, and argue against, after the Russian Revolution. As will be discussed, he did so by equating ballet with science and by connecting the influence of modern dance on ballet as a sign of dangerous decadence.

From 1912 to 1923, Volynsky devoted at least six articles to the highly successful Russian ballet choreographer Michel Fokine, whose early works, *Acis and Galatea, Eunice,* and *Narcisse*, were influenced by Isadora Duncan's expressive dance style (Scholl, 1994: 50; Carbonneau, 1998). Volynsky lambasted Fokine's ballets: 'If

Fokine', wrote Volynsky, 'had only stayed with these classical themes! ...Old age and weariness can never threaten the ballet master who follows the classical ways of Petipa' (Volynsky, 2008: 97). These classical themes that Volynsky alluded to, but never thoroughly explained in his essay, likely concerned the Imperial Ballet traditions created by Petipa, which featured multiple divertissements, the ballerina as the focus of attention, and a plot, which unfolded through numerous acts (Garafola, 1989: 6). Ballet classicism might also have been of value for Volynsky because it expressed gendered difference: women and men danced and behaved differently on his stage. This was not the case with Fokine's critically successful 1911 ballet *Spectre de La Rose* in which Nijinsky portrayed a rose and struck a highly androgynous figure in a pink unitard with a cap decorated in petals. Nijinsky's eponymous role was far from that of the royal, virile figure surrounded by a hierarchically arranged *corps* of dancers, symbolically representing their social 'place' in a stratified society. Nijinsky, moreover, represented in *Spectre* a female's (or homosexual's) sexual fantasy, as he performed with a maiden, who in the intimacy of her boudoir dreams of a fragrant rose transformed into an erotically tantalising, androgynous man. In Fokine's *Spectre,* Nijinsky danced the codified language of ballet, but with a Dionysian abandon. In 1911, the year of Fokine's gender-bending, male-centric work, Volynsky wrote, 'What is worth keeping an eye on is the dancing of the ballerinas, soloists, and the corps de ballet' (Volynsky, 2008:8). For Volynsky, the Mariinsky dancers, particularly the female ballerinas, were carrying out an unimpeachable value: the decorum of a hierarchical ballet tradition, the oration of the *danse d'école*. As mentioned, Volynsky's

understanding of Fokine's new works was hardly direct. He did not see them. But, as Rabinowitz explained, Volynsky felt convinced that Fokine's ballets expressed a decadent Dionysian vision instead of an Apollonian decorum:

> Yet the kind of choreography that Volynskii saw—or rather heard about (and often misunderstood)—on Fokine's stage partook wrong-headedly of Dionysian decadence as opposed to Apollonian purity.
>
> (Rabinowitz, 1996: 6)

In 1917 Volynsky's involvement with ballet was reaching its apogee. That year he became the director of the School of Russian Ballet in Leningrad (Tolstoy, 2017: 4). He lectured on ballet history, philology, and philosophy as well as hired and directed the ballet faculty, which included the Imperial Theatre school trained dancers Agrippina Vaganova, Olga Preobrajenska and Nicholas Legat (Rabinowitz, 1991: 307; Rabinowitz, 1996: 9). After the Russian Revolution, in 1919, Volynsky rejected Christianity as the means to develop a universal, spiritual harmonisation between people (Tolstoy, 2017: 132). In 1925 he published his ballet treatise, *Book of Exaltations, Principles of Classical Dance*. Volynsky's lofty-titled text stemmed from his school lectures, and it was treated seriously: the initial print run numbered 3,000 copies (Rabinowitz, 1996: 9). In it Volynsky stated, 'The word *classical* points to the origin of the dance in ancient Greece' (Volynsky 2008: 135, italics, author's). While dance treatises, from those of Thoinot Arbeau (1589) to Jean-Georges Noverre (1759) to Carlo Blasis (1827), also stated that ballet originated in Ancient Greece, it was Volynsky who saw the basis for this connection in ballet's steps and for—as spiritual expression—as opposed to its thematic content, such as ballet librettos based on Greek mythology. To substantiate the idea that ballet is a canon

of moral ideas, akin to philosophy's canon beginning with Plato and Socrates, Volynsky organized his treatise under the rubric of 'Principles of Classical Dance'. Its sub chapters included 'Choreography', 'Verticality', 'The Toes', 'Turnout', 'Elevation', 'The Arms'. In each of these essays, Volynsky worked to describe and wed the mechanics of, for example, the *plié* with the idea of Apollonian order, logic and gendered difference. 'Therefore [the] male plié', he wrote, 'is not especially pliant, producing more of an impression of a spring in motion than of a passive, obedient flower at the moment of inclination'—as, he found, was the case with the female *plié* (Volynsky, 2008: 164). At the end of the essay, Volynsky wrote that the *plié* was easier for woman to do because of her innate submissiveness, but in a man, the *plié*, nonetheless revealed his power: 'but the man projects his spirit and character in his thrusts upward as he converts the moist liquid, and undulating plié into a solid rock' (Volynsky, 2008: 164). For Volynsky the male ballet dancer's *plié* was a technical prelude to spiritual ejaculation.

Also writing about dance during the 1910s and 1920s was Volynsky's Russian-born, like-minded conservative ballet apologist André Levinson (1887-1933). Equally passionate about ballet's history, but more wedded to its facts, Levinson wrote 'Noverre and the Aesthetics of Ballet in the Eighteenth Century' (1912). Levinson's essay was published in the St. Petersburg journal *Apollon* (1909-1917), which championed the aesthetics of neoclassicism, and with which Volynsky was initially associated—until he irritated its founding members with his demand to be the editor (Tolstoy, 2017: 113). *Apollon*, stated Tolstoy, 'was in fact a realization of

[Volynsky's] own idea from the 1890s of the desired triumph in modern art of the luminous and harmonious Apollo over the archaic and dark Dionysus' (Tolstoy, 2017: 112). The journal's mission, wrote its editor Sergei Makovsky, concerned 'a protest against the formless daring of work that has forgotten the laws of cultural continuity' (Makovsky, 1909:3-4, cited in Scholl, 1994: 86). While the Russian ballet scholar Tim Scholl described the *Apollon* contributors as the 'Apollonians', he never mentioned Nietzsche in respect to his term. In any event, Scholl demonstrated in his text how these writers could be grouped under an Apollonian aesthetic. For example, he quoted the magazine's co-founder Alexandre Benois, who explained that art is a 'system of inherited skills and knowledge' (Scholl cited in Kennedy, 1977: 47-48; Scholl, 1994: 119). Levinson's writing fit well with *Apollon*'s mission, as attested by how he described the eighteenth-century choreographer Noverre. He was not a ballet rebel, as Noverre saw himself to be, but an artist formed by drama's traditions in which narrative as opposed to movement was paramount. In a later essay, 'The Spirit of the Classical Dance' (1925), Levinson criticised Noverre's privileging of gesture and mime. For Levinson what was unique about ballet was its inherited abstract structures and forms. To shape his argument, Levinson quoted Nietzsche:

> It is because the art of the dance is so peculiarly inarticulate that it has never possessed a proper aesthetic philosophy. Choreographic thought—and here we fall straightaway into the use of an improper and misleading term—has always been condemned to expression through paraphrases—high-sounding but inaccurate. It has to content itself with the shifting, uncertain expedient of the analogy, which is, according to Nietzsche, the surest way of falling into error.
>
> (Levinson, 1991: 43)

Utilising Nietzsche's notion that analogy is a road to 'error', Levinson, as well as Volynsky, devoted themselves to distancing dance from drama and forwarding the theory that ballet is an autonomous system of signs. Through their reading of Nietzsche, and his numerous protégées, they exploited the binaries that the philosopher set in motion. As will be shown, they separated his Dionysian/Apollonian analogies to create a new philosophical aesthetics for ballet.

It is worth noting that Levinson, like Volynsky, also disdained the work of Fokine. He criticised how Fokine and Duncan, which he called these 'supposed reformers', interpreted Ancient Greek dance as a natural system of movement that liberated the body and the psyche into intuitive responses (Levinson, 1991: 31). In contrast to this 'new' dance, Levinson and Volynsky argued that ballet and Ancient Greek dance were connected because they followed strict rules, shaping the body into a vision of civilised order (Levinson, 1991: 31). Both dance critics also promulgated the idea of ballet as 'pure'. For them ballet's purity resided with its self-reflexivity, as articulated through its physical forms, architectural structures, and dynamically-precise qualities. Because Duncan and Fokine violated these classical norms, they came to represent for these dance critics the annihilation of Apollonian dance values. Levinson's attack was brutal:

> The vulgarized Dionysus of the Bacchanale and the 'Venus vulgivaga' of Fokine's erotic fantasies have only crept in as by-products of the disintegration of 'classical' ballet's apollonian beauty, whose watchword might well have been Nietzsche's words about freeing the soul from the oppression and tension of dramatic experience through imagining ideal beauty: *Erlösung durch den Schein*.

(Levinson, 1982: 42)

Erlösung durch den Schein translates as 'the appearance through the translucent'. In this key paragraph, Levinson alluded to how Nietzsche defined the Apollonian impulse as a translucent reality, i.e. a given presence through the 'dream' state as opposed to the state of 'intoxication' (Nietzsche 1999, 14). Dance, as he conceived it, presented an idealised transcendent state which the Dionysian impulse vulgarised. Ignoring Nietzsche's effort to create an art of balance between Dionysian and Apollonian impulses, Levinson, like Volynsky, favoured the Apollonian because it corresponded to his formalist sensibilities.

3.5 The Dionysian Sexual Body: Duncan's embrace, Volynsky's rejection

Following the Russian Revolution, Volynsky attempted to align his philosophy with the Soviet emphasis on science and rectitude while Duncan forwarded a vision of a free and uninhibited communication, founded in the sexual, dancing body. Her articulation of this ideal became much more apparent with the 2013 release of the unabridged version of *My Life*. The original text, published upon her death in 1927, reads in comparison to the redacted volume as coy. One passage that appears only in the 2013 version of Duncan's autobiography demonstrates how she accomplished a self-hybridisation, as both a mythological and normal woman, through the Dionysian language of sexual ecstasy and pain. In it she characterises her first sexual experience in mythological terms in that she transforms from 'the chaste nymph that I was into a wild careless bacchante' (Duncan, 2013: 83). Then,

a few pages later, she speaks vexingly, describing the loss of her virginity as a 'ghastly, suffering experience', as if it were a rape (Duncan, 2013: 86).

Like Nietzsche's description of the Dionysian tragic Greek chorus penetrating the opacity of the hero's mask, Duncan eschewed Victorian properness to reveal the corpus of her bodily experiences. She described these experiences as common to femaleness, but also in more dramatically graphic terms. For example, she compared her body to the earth's bounty and her lover's desire to animal necessity: 'Like a flock of wild goats cropping the herbage of the soft hillside so he came gloating over my body, and, like the earth itself, I felt a thousand mouths devour me' (Duncan, 2013: 209). And when Duncan gave birth to her first child Patrick, she described the pain as comparable to the wrath perpetrated by an immortal: '… this terrible, unseen genie had me in his grip, and was, in continued spasms, tearing my bones and sinews apart' (Duncan, 2013: 171). These descriptions of the pain and pleasure associated with sex and childbirth were, unsurprisingly, excised from and modified in the original *My Life*. As a consequence, Duncan appeared far less a Dionysian figure than she actually was. These unexpurgated details of Duncan's memoir deepen the understanding of her dance impulse. Described by scholars as drawn from feelings of abandon, frenzy, horror, pain and delight (Daly, 2002; Kurth, 2001; LaMothe, 2006; Terry, 1984), Duncan's creative inspiration is revealed in her unexpurgated memoir to be more specifically connected to the understanding of her body—not only as a dancer—but also as sexual being and mother.

In contrast to Duncan's bodily descriptions, Volynsky's considerations of the female body revealed his discomfort with eroticism. In his 1916 analysis of Rembrandt's *Bathsheba at Her Bath* (1654), Volynsky wrote, 'The general impression is that of tidiness and strict ritual […] Maniacal eroticism is perfectly absent. Not a shade of it. Moral, pure, and noble' (Volynsky cited in Tolstoy, 2014: 57). This interpretation censors the impression that the painting makes on viewers, given that Rembrandt positioned the viewer as partaking in the erotic gaze of King David, who in the Old Testament accidentally sees and immediately desires the naked Bathsheba, his general's wife. In biblical scripture David's desire is later consummated and it leads to Bathsheba's tragedy: the death of her husband, the birth of a stillborn baby and her expulsion from society. Volynsky undoubtedly knew the story behind Rembrandt's painting, but he repressed its female eroticism and tragedy, distorting that complexity into an alternative reading. According to Tolstoy, Volynsky's analysis of Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* is infused with Jewish Orthodox ideas about the feminine. In this regard, Tolstoy wrote that in Volynsky's Bathsheba, 'There is no hysteria of a diabolical rapture' (Tolstoy, 2014: 56). Bathsheba, it could be said from this statement, is 'pure'.

While Duncan insisted that the sexualised female body was both powerful and vulnerable, Volynsky intimated that the sexualised body was anti-spiritual. His ideas and interpretations were Apollonian in one sense, but also had another point of origin in Judaism. From 1922 to 1925, in the journal *Zhizn'iskusstva* (*Life of Art*),

Volynsky published what Tolstoy described as his Jewish cycle in which 'he formulated his principal notions… later developing them in his Russian criticism, before finally finding their application to Jewish material again (Tolstoy, 2014: 53). In these unpublished writings, Volynsky argued that the prehistoric origins of the Aryan (European) and Jewish peoples originated in the same northern, ancient cult, called the Hyperboreans who lived in perfect bliss and worshipped the sun god Apollo (Tolstoy, 2014: 60). The existence of the cult shows up in the writings of Pindar and Herodotus, and

> had also been taken advantage of by Nietzsche in his *Antichrist* (1888) [who wrote] 'Let us turn to ourselves. We are Hyperboreans, we know well enough how far we live from the rest… On the other side of the North, ice, death is our life, our happiness. We have discovered happiness, we know the way, we have found the way out from whole eras of labyrinth'.[33]
>
> (Nietzsche cited in Tolstoy 2014: 59)

Was this esoteric connection between Christian and Jewish cultures through the god Apollo an attempt to convince a Soviet Union, growing in antisemitism, of the unity of its people (Sloin, 2016). Possibly. Like the young Nietzsche of *BOT*, Volynsky sought an all-encompassing theory to unite the disparate strands of his identities. Volynsky underscored, throughout his life, that his ideas were an attempt at religious synthesis: 'my criticism in its very essence is the contemplation of aesthetic phenomenon through the prism of theology' (Volynsky cited in Rabinowitz, 2008: xx). Volynsky misread the import of Nietzsche's Apollonian

[33] In *Antichrist*, Nietzsche called his followers Hyperboreans. The concept took on unsavory connotations with the Nazis. 'Adolf Hitler, and other Nazi leaders were initiates in the society that bears the name of Thule', considered the capital city of Hyperborea (Terrell, 2011: 62).

formulation, as will be further discussed, but in doing so he found his creative wellspring. Nietzsche's youthful writing served his own tension-filled obsession: to create a holistic message about dance.

In the same year, 1925, that Volynsky published *The Book of Exaltations*, Duncan was working on *My Life*. At the end of her text, she advanced the idea, as had Volynsky, that dance was not only part of an ancient religion, but it also had a larger purpose for national self-understanding:

> I see America dancing, standing with one foot poised on the highest point of the Rockies, her two hands stretched out from the Atlantic to the Pacific, her fine head tossed to the sky, her forehead shining with a crown of a million stars.
>
> (Duncan, 2013: 307)

In borrowing the title of Walt Whitman's poem 'I See America Singing' (1867), Duncan pledged in the above passage that her female art would spiritualise the nation. It would become the United States' terpsichorean anthem, and her artistic legacy would live on as a consequence.[34] Duncan's words performed a rousing claim for American manifest destiny in her description of a female body reaching from coast to coast. Through her co-option of the wide-ranging free thinker, and mover, Walt Whitman (1819-192), she arguably sought to align herself with the poet who

[34] 'The Star Spangled Banner' (1814), the USA anthem, could also have been a source of inspiration for Duncan in her 'I see America Dancing' essay. While its lyrics describe a flag that implacably waves over the vast landscape, undeterred by war and strife, Duncan's female body majestically stretches over the same territory, like a giantess. While the American flag possesses its 'bright stars', Duncan writes that the female dancer's head is 'crown[ed] with a million stars (Duncan 2013, 307; Nietzsche, 2006: 186, cited in Duncan, 1927)

did not valorise Old World culture and Christian mores. But behind the rebellious and exalted Whitman was Nietzsche, whose statement about freedom in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Duncan quoted on the first page of memoir:

> If my virtue be a dancer's virtue, and if I have often sprung with both feet into golden-emerald rapture, and if it be my Alpha and Omega that every thing (sic) heavy shall become light, every body a dancer and every spirit a bird: verily, that is my Alpha and Omega.

Both Whitman and Nietzsche described Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) as a formative figure in their intellectual development (Mullin, 1998: 270). According to the Nietzsche scholar Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen, Emerson was Nietzsche's primary stimulus, an influence that connected Duncan both to American and European philosophies. 'Nietzsche read Emerson every year, sometimes more, throughout his entire productive intellectual life' (Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012: 6). Ratner-Rosenhagen underscored that Nietzsche's articulation of modernism, as a break with the past, came from Emerson (Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012: 17). Nietzsche's call for artists to shirk the status quo, which inspired Duncan, was also indebted to Emerson's formulation of the 'philosopher willing to go it alone without inherited faith, without institutional affiliation, without rock or refuge for his truth claims' (Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2012: 17). Indeed Ratner-Rosenhagen argued that the Nietzsche vogue in the United States, which cut across classes and disciplines, was the result of his being a philosophical prodigal son; Nietzsche was the heir of Emerson, and Duncan sought to be related to them both.

Duncan's 'I see America dancing' passage from her memoir was posthumously serialized in U.S. newspapers and subsequently 'became one of the most oft-

quoted passages in American dance history' (Daly, 2002: 215). In it, Duncan railed against ballet as 'inane coquetry' and jazz dancing as 'the sensual convulsion of the negro', thereby aligning her aesthetic with the same unpalatable aspects of Nazi-Nietzschean thinking (Duncan, 2013: 306). Yet 'I see America Dancing' stands apart from the rest of Duncan's memoir, which presents her dancing through the prisms of a Nietzschean Dionysian chorus and quasi-feminist iterations. One senses in her nationalist mini-essay, with its patriotic and racist statements, a pallid effort to make her aesthetic thoroughly American, even though she spent most of her professional life in Europe. For example, she exploited the symbolism of America's mythic pioneering of the west: 'Rather let them come forth', she wrote of America's children, 'with great strides, leaps, and bounds, with lifted foreheads and far-spread arms, to dance the language of our pioneers…' (Duncan, 2013: 307). In sum, Duncan argued that her dance should be white America's national dance. This ideological argument, with and without its racist component, was taken up in various and shifting forms in the next two decades by American modern dancers Ted Shawn and Martha Graham, and American ballet pioneers Lincoln Kirstein and George Balanchine. Like good Emersonians, their notion of an artist was not informed by the idea of the collective as much as by the individual's ability to 'go it alone' (Rosenhagen, 2012: 12). This, as Ratner-Rosenhagen has underscored in great detail, was part of the development of an Americanised Nietzsche.

3.6 Apollonian Order and Dionysian Freedom from Order: A binary set

of movement values in the writings of Volynsky and Duncan

In the following dance analysis, Volynsky and Duncan's differences will be examined in respect to what rational order signified for Volynsky and what freedom of expression meant for Duncan. At the same time in which Duncan and Volynsky were discussing order and freedom, Max Weber was developing a sociological theory in 'Intermediate Reflections' (*Zwischenbetrachtung*), whereby he expressed the paradoxical fact that modernity had compartmentalised rationality, religious and artistic experiences. Only a culture that divides all spheres of social life into that which is rational and irrational, found Weber, could formulate an 'irrational' area of subjective experience—like art making—as a legitimate yet wholly separate sphere of human activity (Weber, 1946). Since Volynsky and Duncan perceived their dance as a contribution, reflection, commentary, and counterpoint to contemporary developments—and they did so in in an era of perceived cultural and political crisis—Weber's ideas on the rational (order) and the irrational (freedom from order) offers an additional framework for how each dance figure developed his and her aesthetic philosophy. All three writers, Duncan, Volynsky and Weber, developed a critical analysis of modern culture based on the opposition of rationality (Apollo) and the irrational (Dionysus) through their reading of Nietzsche.

Akim Volynsky developed his Apollonian ballet aesthetics during one of the most crucial periods of Russian modern history, that is, before and after the Russian Revolution. Volynsky first wrote about dance in 1908. That year he sought out the

Imperial-trained ballet dancer Nicholai Legat to physically teach him ballet's terminology (Volynsky, 2008: xxiv). Legat, who would become the Mariinsky Theatre's chief choreographer, was known as a staunch conservative: he wished to preserve rather than advance Petipa's ideas (Vanslov, 1998). Legat's aesthetic not only gave Volynsky a working understanding of ballet technique, he may have also influenced Volynsky in his understanding of Petipa's ballets as vehicles to feature the ballerinas, as well as to demonstrate Petipa's expanded vocabulary of the codified art form. Legat's ties to Petipa were fortified by the fact that his father Gustav performed in many of Petipa's creations. After Legat's tutoring, Volynsky wrote his first ballet credo, 'Dance as a Solemn Ritual'. In this 1911 essay, Volynsky compared 'ballet's substance'—which builds from *pliés* to *dégagés* to traveling steps in increasing degrees of difficulty—as 'an inseparable whole' (Volynsky, 2008: 5) This whole, he argued, allows for 'the regeneration of ballet', e.g. for its continuing survival' (Volynsky, 2008: 5). Several sentences later, when Volynsky explained what comprised an ideal ballet work, he also posited a way for ballet to remain culturally viable: '… There must exist a normal and judicious atmosphere in which the entire canon, the whole gamut of movements peculiar to the human body can be displayed' (Volynsky, 2008: 5). This 'whole' or 'canon' of steps represents the import of the essay's title, 'Dance as a Solemn Ritual'. Like a holy incantation, ballet's orderly steps will provide its significance, its rational yet ritual staying power. As for the Mariinsky ballet's plots, focused on kings and queens, fairies and witches, Volynsky treated them as background noise. He forwarded, instead, the idea that ballet's vocabulary formed its message, as overseen by a

spiritual leader, the ballet master, who initiates his novices in the form's devotional, systematic steps.

Volynsky's argument about ballet's mystic logic laid the groundwork for a new dialectic, one that stayed clear of ballet's aristocratic-oriented language. His approach benefited him in pre-revolutionary Russia, and for a time in its post-revolutionary years. For example, in 1917 Volynsky became 'head of the section of Russian ballet, which had been connected to [the former Imperial] Institute of Scenic Art' (Rabinowitz, 1996: 7). A year later, Volynsky was named the ballet section head of the newly created weekly publication *Life of Art*. There he produced some of his most enduring essays on dance, which were a-political in approach in that he focussed on female dancers and well-loved Russian ballets like *Giselle, Coppélia* and *Swan Lake*. Indeed, of the 40 published dance essays written by Volynsky that have been translated into English, 26 are devoted to discussing his favourite ballerinas, where he detailed their danced phrases with empirical precision. The other eight essays written by Volynsky are devoted to lambasting Duncan and Fokine. The last group of Volynsky's translated dance essays, to be discussed, are highly philosophical, and are written with an obsessively-argued perspective: that ballet is so scientific that it embodies a realm of Euclidean mathematical perfection.

Volynsky's most philosophical dance essays in the early Soviet era were written with the goal of reforming ballet teaching and choreography, and thwarting the

contaminating influences of Diaghilev, Fokine and their dancers (Rabinowitz, 1996: 5). Whereas Volynsky's initial writing about ballet, published before the Russian Revolution, occasionally incorporated both Dionysian and Apollonian aesthetics, in post-Imperial Russia, his admiration for the sensual Dionysian ballet dancer evaporated. Instead, he developed the idea of the ballerina as exemplar of female Russian purity. His reading of Dostoevsky might have contributed to this notion: works like Dostoevsky's 'A Gentle Creature' (1876) and figures such as the self-sacrificing Sonya in *Crime and Punishment* (1866) suggest Volynsky's Slavophile, traditionally Russian orientation. Before 1917, Volynsky described both Apollonian and Dionysian elements in women's dancing. In 'Tamara Karsavina' (1911), he wrote of the ballerina's unacknowledged affiliation with Fokine's aesthetic as, 'from her art, which we still cannot say is perfect, flows a gentle ecstasy' (Volynsky, 2008: 14). When writing about Anna Pavlova, in 1913, Volynsky ardently stated, 'Before us is a major talent, full of hymns to Apollo and dithyrambs in honor of Dionysus' (Volysnky, 2008: 47). Yet Volynsky also censored Pavlova's animal quality, her too strong body: 'Pavlova's legs are lanky and muscular, taut as a goat' (Volynsky, 2008: 47). By the 1920s, Volynsky's rejection of certain elements associated with modernism and Dionysian freedom, with the female ballerinas as animal and ecstatic, was codified. In his final philosophy, the ballerina ideally symbolised conventional femininity. For example, while writing about Olga Spessivtseva (1885-1991), his favourite ballerina, who according to Tolstoy became his common law wife, Volynsky subtly chastised the choreography in *Don Quixote* because it emphasised the female jump. In 'Don Quixote' (1923), he stated, 'The

soul [of the dancer] continues to play and rushes about the air. In the air it is always slightly masculine, with a slight patina of heroic which is not characteristic of female construction' (Volynsky, 2008: 101; Tolstoy, 2017: 141). Volynsky's criticism of the female moving beyond her designated realm was likely related to Spessivtseva's decision to leave him and Russia. Volynsky may also have been reacting to the increasing visibility of powerful women in Soviet Russia. Nadezhda Krupskaya, for example, was considered more than Lenin's socialist-radical wife. From 1917, she held political posts in the Department of Education, and from 1929 to 1939, she served as its Deputy Minister (Skatin and Tsov'janov, 1994). Even if the social transformation of women played some part in Volynsky's conservative ballet philosophy, what did not change in the 17 years that he wrote about dance was his perception that the ballet dancer has the ability to transcend earthly decadence through the *danse d'école*, whose forms, he argued, were eternal and abstract. In 'Tamara Karsavina' (1911), Volynsky underscored this abstraction as 'godlike,' as rhapsodically stated in his essay's first paragraph. Ballet,

> develops out of a person's great need to show his mythological essence, his second, inner, godlike 'I,' in the gesture of the movement and to transform and dissolve his materiality into something distinctly ideal, each feature in classical dance is full of abstract content and timeless thought.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 13)

More than a decade later, André Levinson, who had moved to Paris in 1921, echoed Volynsky's formalist-leanings. Levinson wrote in 1925 that ballet's technique is its central conversation:

> The technique is no supplementary reënforcement to his art, nor is it a mere device, designed to gain easy applause, like (according to Stendhal) the art

> of the versifier. It is the very soul of the dance; it *is* the dance itself.
> (Levinson, 1991: 44, italics, author's)

While Levinson employed the word 'soul', he did not equate ballet in his writings with mystic science, as was the case with Volynsky. In 'Dance as a Solemn Ritual' (1911), for example, Volynsky wrote how the *fouetté* is 'a whole new world unfolding before our eyes grandly, delicately, and in the glow of a kind of higher mathematics of correctness and charm' (Volynsky, 2008: 4). Volynsky's selection and combination of words indicates the care he was taking to emphasise the science, mathematics, and industrialisation developing in the early Soviet period. What he described as 'a whole new world' was rational (in its 'correctness') and comprised of order ('higher mathematics'). Although his style of writing about dance—as unlocking truth—was matched by Isadora Duncan's, Volynsky's language was contextualised by the political changes in his Russian environment; Duncan's writing, in contrast, was arguably freer in expression because she worked outside the strictures of a nation in upheaval. In both cases, however, these ambitious dance figures set in motion the argument that dance, as expressed through Apollonian or Dionysian characteristics, is a metaphor for human agency and the social condition. This perspective was forceful, unprecedented, and had never been articulated with such unique force.

The historian James Scanlan characterised Volynsky's artistic milieu as being engaged in a spiritual wrestling that was fundamentally inspired by Nietzsche:

> The remarkable renaissance of Russian art […] in the first decade of the twentieth century [which] owed much to a small group of religious rebels who

> drew their inspiration from neither […] the radical intelligentsia or the Orthodox Church. Their secular guide was not Nicholas Chernyshevsky, but Friedrich Nietzsche, who showed them the sanctity of paganism and classical antiquity.[35]
>
> (Scanlan, 1970: 17)

Volynsky, nonetheless, disdained Nietzsche. Yet at the same time, he wrote like a Nietzsche, cross-pollinating his religious and scientific rhetoric into a creation theory in which science and mysticism gave birth to the new ballet. In the early anti-religious Soviet period, when religion was understood as an 'opiate for the masses', Volynsky demonstrated his rebelliousness by employing Nietzsche's language of transcendence which Soviet bureaucrats disdained (Pospielovsky, 1987). Volynsky's writing reached an apogee of excitement while describing ballet as fulfilling the aesthetics of the Apollonian, understood in chemical and industrial terms. In his essay, 'The Croisé and The Effacé', incorporated into his 1925 text *The Book of Exaltations*, Volynsky wrote,

> Ice is croisé. It melts the water and it is effacé. But this same water now constitutes a kind of croisé for the even more diffuse steam. The steam in its condensed state is a croisé. In a machine it provides effacé with its motion. And in turn this motion in various forms and dimensions becomes alternately now croisé, now effacé. Such is the goal of this natural phenomena [sic]. Constantly and everywhere before us pass two poles, two images, two types of action, but both are unconscious.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 147)

In this passage, which initially appeared obscure, Volynsky intimated that these open and closed leg and arm positions, which are basic to presenting the ballet

[35] Nikolay Chernyshevsky (1828-1889) was a Russian revolutionary democrat. A leader of the revolutionary democratic movement of the 1860s, his book *What Is To Be Done?* had a profound influence on Vladimir Lenin, Emma Goldman and numerous other political intellectuals (Frank, 1990: 187).

dancer on stage, are nothing less than molecular chemistry. As stated, Volynsky wrote, 'In a machine it provides effacé with its motion phrase'. He used 'machine' to signify the choreographic phrase. Given that the Soviet Union was championing industrialisation as the future of the country's peace and prosperity, Volynsky's word choice is politically astute. To call art a machine, in this context, is a compliment to the Soviet experiment. Volynsky described *croisé* as ice, which has more densely packed molecules than water. He might have made this analogy because the *croisé* position, where the dancer's lower limbs are crossed while her upper limbs spiral out of her spine, presents a more solid, or more tightly packed figure to the audience. While *croisé* is to molecular ice, *effacé* is to molecular water (H^20), in that connections between the hydrogen and the oxygen molecules are more loosely connected. In turn, Volynsky described how the dancer's transition from *croisé* (ice) to *effacé* (water) creates a 'diffuse steam'. This balletic transition, from closed to open limbs, is akin to the rapid loosening of hydrogen particles. Chemistry and ballet, argued Volynsky, are complex co-ordinations of matter (Volynsky, 2008: 147). Writing for the new Soviet society, Volynsky fused Apollonian with Soviet-industrial metaphors.

Volynsky's eccentric ideas about ballet in *The Book of Exhalations* (1925) marked his last major contribution to dance. Sensing the danger of being a cultural theorist, Volynsky considered immigrating in 1922 (Tolstoy, 2017: 6). in 1923, as mentioned, his wife and muse Spessivtseva left Soviet Russia (Tolstoy, 2017: 141). In 1924, when Lenin died, his less stringent Communism was replaced by Stalin's oppressive

regime. Volynsky's ballet school, the locus of his radical ballet philosophy, was closed and he was fired from his position as a dance critic (Tolstoy, 2017: 141). He must have felt very alone. Even his dance school colleagues Vera Volkova and Nicholai Legat had left for Europe (Rabinowitz, 1996: 9). In 1926, the 63-year-old Volynsky was reported to have died from heart failure (Rabinowitz 1991, 308). Volkova, however, wrote that in 1967 she had received information that, 'Misha G. said he "disappeared"—was arrested and died, nobody knows under exactly what circumstances. His books are banned and nobody is allowed to mention his name' (Volkova, 2007: 158).

In wake of Levinson's emigration to Paris in 1921 and his separation from Spessivtseva in 1923, Volynsky wrote the essay 'What Will Ballet Live By?' (1923). In it Volynsky feverishly made the case that ballet's value lies with its form, specifically its vertical aesthetics. They represent man's higher reasoning:

> Society is entering a new phase of history… after the winds die down and the hurricane subsides, ballet's ineradicable higher instincts will awaken, instincts that we can call vertical culture. Everything will ascend upward, everything will rise on its toes, as in ancient Greece, where Apollo's dancing on pointe was the symbol of all that was poetically beautiful and sublime.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 84)

Volynsky's notion, as embodied by Apollo, of the 'sublime' and the 'vertical' heralding a better future for ballet was echoed a decade later in the rhetoric of Lincoln Kirstein, known for co-founding with George Balanchine the New York City Ballet (see chapter 5). The legacy of Nietzschean binaries consequently evolved cross-culturally and geographically, from Petersburg and Paris to New York.

Volynsky's code words for the Bolshevik revolution, 'hurricane and winds,' indicated his belief that the kind of ballet he had envisioned would prevail again. But he was wrong. It would be Balanchine who understood that the era of 'pure' Russian Imperial ballet was over, and who saved himself, artistically and physically, by leaving his homeland.

After working in Europe as a freelance choreographer, with bouts of life-threatening illnesses, Balanchine insisted that if he were to create an American ballet with Lincoln Kirstein, it would have to be in the home of skyscrapers, New York City, not in Hartford, as his benefactor had planned (Taper, 1984: 153-154). By the 1950s, explained Lynn Garafola, Balanchine had 'infused' his dancers with a fleetness that was as 'dramatically scaled as the skyline' (Garafola, 1999: 18). Verticality would be connected for Balanchine not with Russia, but with New York. For Volynsky, verticality was an abstract answer to chaos; it was the scientific future, one in which the Apollonian value of order could dominate:

> Science is entirely vertical—it straightens out life's crookedness and points toward the heights. It is especially important to note that the ancient world understood this issue clearly.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 137)

Connecting this theory to ballet, Volynsky then described its dancers' movement quality as being completely erect:

> A dancer will never bend her back, nor will she ever round it in any of her turns. This would distort her entire figure. Everything in ballet is straight, drawn upward, extended outward with a steadiness that provides perfect harmony.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 138)

Volynsky's daring theory that ballet could be abstract science while maintaining its pre-revolutionary repertoire did not conform to the Soviet ballet zeitgeist. 'In the notes of the Administration of Leningrad Academic Theaters' of 1924, writes Scholl,

> 'the creation of works of revolutionary content' foreshadow much of the future of Soviet ballet… The committee then commissioned Nikolai Glebovich Vinogradov, head of the Studio of Monumental Theater, to rewrite the librettos of the four promising works [including *The Sleeping Beauty*]. In doing so, the committee established two important precedents for the formation of the ballet repertory in the Soviet era: first, evidence of the general worth of a work would be furnished by its music rather than its dancing; and second, the renovation of the genre would commence with its narrative.
>
> (Scholl, 1994: 112)

With later Soviet *drambalets*, like *Flames of Paris* (1932), the state was narrated and idealised through a dancing ensemble of proletarian workers. In contrast, Volynsky's descriptions of Apollo as ballet's symbol and of ballet dancers that did not bend like commoners reinforced ballet's historical connection to European monarchy: In the *Ballet Royal de la Nuit* (1653), King Louis XIV performed as Apollo; Catherine the Great, who founded the Directorate of the Imperial Theatres in 1776, gave enormous support to ballet, acquired vast collections of French art (depicting mythological figures), and 'established the country as a European power' (Lee, 2015: 185). The narration of ballet as developing out of the European court and through an Apollonian aesthetic is forwarded by Jennifer Homans in *Apollo's Angels, A History of Ballet* (2010). Arguably, her work owes much to the spirit, if not the concepts, of Volynsky as transformed by Balanchine. She expressed the Volynskian notion of ballet dancers as being connected to a Christian-Greek mythological elite not only in the title of her book, but also in her introduction,

where she stated the following about her experience as a student at Balanchine's School of American Ballet:

> Besides, there was something about standing so straight, about the body working so beautifully, and about our dedication and our intense desire to dance that *did* set us apart. We really were, or so we thought, an elect.
>
> (Homans, 2010: xviii, italics, author's)

Homans's understanding of ballet appears to be informed, whether consciously or not, by Volynsky's philosophy that ballet is Apollonian—not Dionysian.[36] She emphasised that

> Apollo holds a special place in the story [of ballet]. He is the god of civilization and healing, prophecy and music—not the noisy pipes and percussion of Pan and Dionysus, but the soothing and harmonious strains of the lyre, which set men's minds at ease.
>
> (Homans, 2010: xxi)

Given that Homans was writing in the twenty-first century and that the lyre was the instrument accompanying Ancient Greek lyric poetry, and it was written and listened to by men *and* women, it is odd, yet all together logical, that the Volynsky-oriented Homans associated the lyre and ballet with a masculine identity. She argues that it is 'men's', not women's, 'minds that are set at ease' by Apollo's playing (Homans, 2010: xxi). And like Volynsky, who worked to transform the ballerina into a non-sensual ideal, Homans suggests that ballet dancers transcend the erotic:

> But is classical ballet just spirit and aspiration? Isn't it also, and much more obviously, an earthly art, sexual and erotic? Here too angels are our best guide: they are not themselves sexual, but they can (and do) inspire erotic feelings and desires. Dancers infrequently experience their art as sexual […] If anything ballet is purifying, every movement physically honed and

[36] Homans (2010: 292) mentioned Akim Volynsky just once in her ballet history text by quoting the Russian ballet critic's description of Pavlova's taut-like-goat legs.

> essential, with no superfluity or excess: it is a kind of grace.
>
> (Homans 2010: xxii)

Given Homans's background, her theories about ballet descends most directly from Balanchine, who created the neoclassical masterwork *Apollon musagète* (1928), and also from the prodigious writings of Kirstein (to be discussed in chapter 5). Thanks to Homans, Kirstein's legacy continues in New York. The Lincoln Kirstein Lecture inaugurates, each season, Homans's Center for Ballet and the Arts, of which she is the director. The organization, founded in 2014, is housed by New York University and underwritten by the Mellon Foundation. It can be said that Volynsky's desire for an Apollonian-oriented ballet aesthetic, carried out theoretically and practically at an institute, is being realised at Homans' centre, which provides financial support to academics, freelance writers and composers interested in ballet and other related art forms. The institute's artistic roster since 2016 overwhelmingly featured ballet artists and formalist choreographers. Yet perhaps because of complaints about the centre's narrow interests, experimental dance choreographers have also received fellowships in the wake of Donald Trump's election to the presidency. Homans's directorship of the centre was announced shortly after her Apollo-titled book, which furnished a universalist description of ballet practice:

> All dancers carry in their mind's eye some Apollonian image or feeling of the grace, proportion, and ease they strive to achieve. And as any good dancer knows, it is not enough to assume Apollonian poses or *appear* as he does in art and statuary: for the positions to be truly convincing the dance must, somehow, *become* civilized.
>
> (Homans, 2010: xxi, italics, author's)

The concept of a ballet as a vertical grace and civilising force, the election of the

male god Apollo as ballet's icon, and the notion of the ballet dancer as possessing an asexual purity was expressed first by Volynsky—and afterwards, in quick succession, as will be discussed, by Oskar Schlemmer, Lincoln Kirstein and then Jennifer Homans over the course of exactly a century. Yet these series of associations and theories are ones that Isadora Duncan, colloquially identified as the mother of modern dance, undermined in her writings. Duncan deliberately did not evoke the image of the erect, civilised figure in her writings and dances. She was vastly more interested in connecting dance to extreme emotional experiences and to a rebellion against social mores.

In Duncan's unabridged *My Life* she employed the Dionysian-oriented word 'ecstasy' 22 times, 'passion' 20 times, 'sorrow' 20 times, 'pain' 15 times, and 'joy' 47 times (see index in Duncan, 2013). In relation to her dancing, the words 'order', 'rational', and 'logic' do not appear in her memoir. The contrasts between Volynsky's and Duncan's aesthetic- philosophical orbits suggest the divergent ways twentieth-century Western concert dance history narrated and understood itself. That said, in Duncan's memoir Apollo is not negated. He serves as a metaphor for the intellect and enlightenment, not for dancing. For example, when Duncan visited the sculptor Auguste Rodin's studio for the first time, she wrote, 'My pilgrimage to Rodin resembled that of Psyche seeking the God Pan in his grotto, only I was not asking the way to Eros, but to Apollo' (Duncan, 2013: 73). In another instance, Duncan enthusiastically described Apollo as possessing 'the likeness of St. Sebastian!' (Duncan, 2013: 95). She seemed to be underscoring the

idea in both passages that these Western heroes, of Greek and Christian culture, were similar: their concerns, and desires, were beyond the pleasures of the flesh.

Duncan, as was certainly the case with Volynsky, sought to create a new language for dance through the use of metaphors and highly-wrought images. She employed, for example, the metaphor of the body as a stretched bow to describe the moment before a dancer releases herself into space. The Duncan master teacher Lori Belilove explained that this movement initiation should be experienced as a 'lengthening upward' (Daly, 2002: 75). The metaphor of the body as a lengthened bow, which comes directly from Duncan, is a concrete one in that the bow is stretched from a parabolic to a linear shape; the tension of this stretching sends the dancer outwards. But this trajectory in the Duncan technique is one where the limbs are not vertically aligned or set in space. The arms and legs often trail behind the torso and pelvis, like a kite's tassels instead of a Christian angel's outstretched wings. Duncan's visualising techniques now appear in the Alexander technique and the recent work on imagery by movement educator Eric Franklin (1996, 2004). Both of these physical techniques purport to decrease psychological tension that resides in the body. To underscore this point about Duncan's technique based on the idea of freedom, Daly wrote, 'The point of Duncan's practice was to reject an image of control and to replace it with one of release' (Daly, 2002: 74). In these and other recent writings on dance, the notion of release suggests the opposite of the Apollonian value of order and restraint. It pulls Duncan's dance values towards contact improvisation, release technique, flying low, Gaga, as well as dance from

the African diaspora.

Despite the considerable amount of Duncan scholarship, there still exists a misconception that Duncan dancing is not based on a technique (Straus, 2012). This may be because Duncan's instruction of dancers shirked technical language: 'the basis of the Duncan technique', explained her late protégé Marie-Theresa, 'is motion—namely, the walk. Out of the walk evolves skipping, running, leaping' (Daly, 2002: 80). Yet how one walks and leaps, and with what images, is what matters. This idea was recently discovered by the widely-acclaimed New York City Ballet principal dancer Sara Mearns. She performed a version of Duncan's *Narcissus* (c. 1900) to Chopin's Op. 64, No. 2 at The Joyce Theatre in June 2017 and received a highly enthusiastic review (Macaulay, 2017). Speaking of the Duncan technique, Mearns said about how she dances, 'I'm so held' (Kourlas, 2017). Mearns also said about the work, 'You feel like a woman doing this solo […] I don't feel like someone's telling me to do something. I feel independent, and I feel I could be anywhere doing it: a field or in the ocean — anywhere! I feel completely free' (Kourlas, 2017). This evaluation by a ballet dancer that Duncan's dance inspires the feeling of being a free-moving woman is notable. When learning the solo, Belilove told Mearns to imagine herself as the wind:

> The wind blows you up, and it turns you to the left and brings you around […] Now, I'm open to interpretation. You need to feel nature. It is water, it is the wind blowing, it is a storm—it is something that catches you. And then you settle to be your glorious, narcissist self.
>
> (Belilove cited in Kourlas, 2017)

As dance journalist Gia Kourlas pointed out, Belilove's imagistic choreographic directive was one that Mearns was not used to hearing. This, arguably, was because the bulk of the repertoire Mearns has performed at New York City Ballet was still Balanchine's. Former New York City Ballet principal ballerina Suzanne Farrell explained that in a Balanchine work, 'all the reasons were in the steps' (Farrell, 2011: 297). In Duncan's choreography, it resides with images drawn from nature and the imagination that provides the impulse for learning and performing Duncan's dance (Kourlas, 2017).

Though Duncan was not known for employing anatomical explanations to describe her dancing, she did discuss how the solar plexus is the dancer's 'motor power' and 'the central spring of all movement' (Duncan, 2013: 61). The location of the solar plexus, however, was not commonly known then, nor is it now. Located behind the stomach, and in the region of the celiac artery, the solar plexus is neither composed of muscle nor bone. It is a dense cluster of nerve cells. Duncan may have chosen this part of the body as her 'motor power' because as part of the nervous system, it connects the brain to the body. Thus, its existence nullifies Cartesian dualism predicated on the separation of the mind and the body, and the rational and the irrational (especially in respect to women's perceived intellect in the early twentieth century). For Duncan dancers, the solar plexus is a place of the imagination: One cannot see or touch it. It is found in the dark recesses of the body, much like a nocturnal Dionysian spirit.

3.7 Duncan's and Volynsky's Dionysian and Apollonian Terminology

Duncan named her second school, established in 1911 in Bellevue, France, The Dionysian (Di-Donato, 2009: 15). She also titled her month-long 1915 series of performances at New York's Century Opera House 'The Dionysian Season' (Daly, 2002: 150). On her school's letterhead, Nietzsche's term is printed above Duncan's initials. This stacking of D.I. (Dionysian) on top of I.D. (Isadora Duncan) provokes a semantic, visual connection. Like a double mirror, the word Dionysian and Duncan's name are reflected in each other. With France's entrance into World War I, Duncan turned over The Dionysian to the French military; they transformed her dance school into a hospital for the wounded. In the following, Duncan described the Dionysian's defilement by the erection of Christian symbols in the wake of the war:

> In each room I saw that my bas-reliefs of bacchantes and dancing fauns and nymphs and satyrs had been taken down from the walls… and in the place of the bas-reliefs were cheap effigies of a black Christ on a golden cross.
> (Duncan, 2013: 275)

Duncan then came to the crux of her sentiment regarding what had happened to her dancing institution: 'I felt that Dionysus had been completely defeated. This was the reign of Christ after the Crucifixion' (Duncan, 2013: 275). Duncan was positing that her dance was being defiled by the impositions of Christianity and, by implication, puritanical ideology concerning the body. Her comments underscore the fact that while the Christian tradition, as it consolidated in the Middle Ages, encouraged the practice of music in its institutions, dance was barred because of its association with the desires and instinctual needs of the body. Only the body's stages, birth (baptism), maturation (marriage) and death (funeral mass), found expression in the Church. In Duncan's despair over Christianity's pervasive power

over life, she followed Nietzsche, who wrote in 'An Attempt at Self-Criticism' (1886) how Christianity had become the source of modernity's ills:

> From the start Christianity was, essentially and fundamentally, the embodiment of disgust and antipathy for life, merely disguised, concealed, got up as the belief in an 'other' or a 'better' life. Hatred of the 'world,' and condemnation of the emotions, the fear of beauty and sensuality, a transcendental world invented the better to slander this one, basically a yearning for non-existence […] So then, with this questionable book, my instinct, an affirmative instinct for life, turned *against* morality and invented a fundamentally opposite doctrine and valuation of life, purely artistic and *anti-Christian.* What I should call it? As a philologist and man of letters, I baptized it, now without a degree of licence—for who knows the true name of the Antichrist? —with the name of a Greek god: I called it *Dionysiac*'.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1993: 8-9, italics, author's)

Duncan's danced testament of human rights injustices carried out by a historically Christian culture, in this case Russia's, occurred with her solo *Marche Slav*. Dance critic Carl Van Vechten captured the raw, tragic power of this expressive solo, when he wrote in a 1917 review:

> When the strains of *God Save the Czar* are first heard in the orchestra, she falls to her knees and you see the peasant shuddering under the blows of knout. The picture is a tragic one, cumulative in its horrific details … They are crushed, these hands, crushed and bleeding after their long serfdom; they are not hands at all but claws, broken, twisted piteous claws! The expression of frightened, almost uncomprehending joy with which Isadora concludes the march is another stroke of her vivid imaginative genius.
>
> (Van Vechten, 1974: 26)

This kind of work of Duncan's appealed to certain socialist critics and commentators. Underscoring the notion that Duncan's dance defied Christian mores as well as critiqued Christian culture, the Duncan enthusiast Max Eastman, who served as the editor of *America's* leftist periodical *The Masses* (1911-1917), wrote,

> She rode the wave of the revolt against puritanism, she rode it, and with her fame and Dionysian rapture drove it on. She was—perhaps it is simplest to say—the crest of the wave, and event not only in art, but in the history of life.
>
> (Eastman, 1927, cited in Daly, 2002: 178)

Eastman not only employed Nietzsche's term, he articulated how Duncan, like himself, disavowed white America's founding cultural values: puritanism, individualism, and capitalism. For Eastman, Duncan served an anti-elitist, democratic ideology. Her school of thought continues today through organizations like Movement Research in New York and Tanzfabrik Berlin.

Though Volynsky hardly had a sea of writers attesting to the merits and significance of his work, the force of his own writing—in which he treated ballet as science, as religion, and the key to civilization—was as impressionable as the dancing descriptions written by Duncan's admirers. In titling his ballet treatise *Book of Exultations* (1925), Volynsky associated it with the New Testament's *Book of Revelation*, an allegory between good and evil. By the time of his writing, however, religious language no longer connected with Soviet atheist culture; nor could Volynsky's idea of 'good' art be normalized as Apollonian purity. In the treatise's final chapter, titled 'Vis medicatrix (Strength, the Healer)', he wrote, 'Classical dance is Apollonian. It is permeated by consciousness, and not one of its designs is built on the variegated elements of sensual life' (Volynsky, 2008: 258). Volynsky's definition of 'consciousness' indicates that his text grounds ballet in Platonic rationality, by describing 'the intellect' as regulated 'according to the laws of logic' (Volynsky, 2008: 258). While Volynsky undoubtedly wished that the *Book of*

Exaltations would become the text for balletomanes and ballet practitioners, he was perhaps also suggesting that ballet could heal the rifts in Russian/Soviet society.

While Duncan privileged the Dionysian, Volynsky went further in destabilising Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian balance in his thesis about 'healing.' In it, he located 'classical dance' in Apollo's realm and wrote that,

> It is organically opposed to anything Dionysian. Bacchic currents can intrude only from the outside, in momentary episodes which do not destroy dance's integral wholeness.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 258)

Volynsky's effort to eradicate the free-form Dionysian elements in dance, as exemplified by Duncan, indicate that he was attempting to synthesise his own artistic taste with a Soviet ideality: one in which individuality was subsumed by a formal collective, the free imagination restricted by aesthetic purity. Yet paradoxes in each author's writings indicate that the influence of *BOT* remains more complex than either likely imagined. Nonetheless, and despite Duncan's and Volynsky's respective distortions of Nietzsche's central theory, there are several instances in their writings where they follow the philosopher's theoretic line by placing Apollo and Dionysus side by side. In Volynsky's *Birth of Apollo* libretto, which echoes Nietzsche's book title, *The Birth of Tragedy*, he wrote that after

> Apollo rises on his toes, preparing for flight […] The crowd sings a dithyramb, interlaced with a hymn into one whole, as Dionysus and Apollo have mixed with each other in a cult of the new humanity.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 84-85)

Correspondingly, when Duncan set foot in 1903 on her first Greek island, she

exclaimed to some perplexed villagers,

> At last we have arrived, after many wanderings, in the Sacred Land of Hellas! Salute, O Olympian Zeus! And Apollo! And Aphrodite! Prepare, O ye Muses, to dance again! Our singing may awaken Dionysus and his sleeping Bacchantes!
>
> (Duncan, 2013: 100)

These two instances in Volynsky's and Duncan's writings nonetheless feel like footnotes that remain outside their central arguments for dance.

Whereas Duncan increasingly sought out concrete historical content for her dancing, such as in her solo *Marseillaise* (1915), in which she embodied the statues on the Arc de Triomphe, Volynsky argued that form, not content, expressed the primary significance of dance. In *Book of Exultations,* he compared classical dance to the diamond, the cubic structure, which in Ancient Greek means unbreakable. Volynsky wrote,

> Even if we imagine character, genre, social, and historical dances performed with extreme perfection, we shall still see before us only the flashing of semi-precious stones—rubies, sapphires, emeralds—not the perfect radiance of snow white diamonds. Classical dance in ballet is just such a diamond.
>
> (Volynsky, 2008: 258)

In respect to Volynsky's writing about diamonds and Russian ballet, it is worth noting that Balanchine's first plotless full-length ballet *Jewels* (1967) is comprised of three sections: Emeralds, Rubies and Diamonds. Several late-twentieth century dance writers (Mason, 1975: 232; Reynolds, 1977: 247-250; Gottlieb, 2010: 160) have noted that the style of the French ballet school style is represented through Balanchine's choreography for the 'Emeralds' section, the American (Balanchine)

school of ballet in 'Rubies', and the St. Petersburg school in 'Diamonds'. In this last section, Balanchine paid homage to the Imperial Russian ballet tradition honed by Petipa—the same ballet tradition that Volynsky first argued embodied Apollonian virtues. In the cases of both Balanchine and Volynsky, the diamond symbolised the high-water mark of ballet's place in Russia's cultural life.

Even though the differences and oppositions forged by Volynsky and Duncan read like individual mythologies more than legible dance philosophies, they nonetheless show Nietzschean influence at their cores. Duncan described herself as series of Dionysian identities, as a rebel, victim and heroine, as a fecund sensual female body, with bosoms and thighs (Duncan, 2013: 15, 74, 83, 201, 209, 260, 209). Volynsky, in turn, projected his desire for an orderly universe that symbolised *corps de ballet* dancers as 'roving of the planets amid the immovable stars in the firmament' (Volynsky, 2008: 44). With ballet as Volynsky's synecdoche, he engaged with a larger, in this case astronomical, sphere of thought. As with Lucretius's writing in *On the Nature of Things* (Book II), where he described 'the motion and shape' of celestial bodies as a means of understanding human's place in the world (Fowler and Fowler, 2003), Volynsky argued that interpreting ballet's abstract components would sharpen Russian's critical thinking: 'Interpreting the components, the style, and the laws of this dancing's forms and figures will introduce Russians to abstract theorizing' (Volynsky, 2008: 85). Volynsky's ambition to make ballet pertinent to Russian/Soviet culture shows that his philosophising was not mad or incoherent but contained a social consciousness; he hoped that his aesthetic project would

serve as a model for the betterment of an explosively changing society.

In the next chapter, the mapping of the Apollonian and Dionysian ideals continues through a discussion of the Germans Oskar Schlemmer and Mary Wigman. They too articulated their dance through Nietzsche's formulations, through ballet versus modern dance, and through male versus femaleness.

Chapter 4

Nietzschean Dance Visionaries:

Oskar Schlemmer (1888-1943) and Mary Wigman (1886-1973)

> Times like these, times of collapse and renewal raise the ultimate questions as well as basic ones: they lay bare the roots of all being and becoming, as part of the attempt to rediscover meaning.
>
> ---Oskar Schlemmer, 29 December 1923

> Time and again I gave myself up to the intoxication of this experience, to this almost lustful destruction of the physical being, a process in which, for seconds, I almost felt a oneness within the cosmos.
>
> ---Mary Wigman, circa 1920

4.1 Introduction

Nietzsche's theory of the Dionysian levelling Apollonian order and galvanising social transformation in *BOT* reads like a parable for the events of 1919, whereby the tumult of The Great War (1914-1918) prompted the demise of Germany's monarchical order.[37] With the first constitutional government signed into effect in Weimar, individuals were no longer servants of the Catholic king. For radical utopian thinkers like Oskar Schlemmer and Mary Wigman, Nietzsche's idea of actualising universality—not through institutional religion, or monarchical allegiance—but through art appeared to be within reach.[38] In Nietzsche's preface

[37] The Weimar Republic's new constitution, created in August 1919 by a national assembly in Weimar, occurred following the abdication of King Ludwig III of Bavaria.

[38] Nietzsche's call for artists 'to build a new civilization' (Ferranti, 2004: 38) resonated strongly with creatives living in the new Weimar Republic. Count Harry Kessler (1868-1937), a writer, diplomat and patron of modern art, typified the 1920s Weimar citizen enthralled by Nietzsche's ideas. 'The way in which Nietzsche influenced, or more precisely possessed us,' wrote Kessler, 'cannot be compared with the effect of any other contemporary figure or poet' (Kessler cited in Koss, 2003: 738).

to *BOT*, he made this idea clear: 'art', he wrote, 'is the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity in life' (Nietzsche, 1999: 54). In this chapter, it will be shown how the German artists Schlemmer and Wigman can be perceived as Nietzscheans, given their generous reiteration of his ideas about creativity, which pointed to their efforts to produce metaphysical, transformative dance art. Like Duncan and Volynsky, as discussed in chapter 3, Wigman and Schlemmer will be shown to bear similarities to these dance figures in their uses of Nietzsche. Moreover, all four of them, it can be said, were *BOT* partisans: Duncan and Wigman demonstrated a strong partiality for the Dionysian; Volynsky and Schlemmer valorised the Apollonian.

In this chapter, Wigman and Schlemmer's prose and respective landmark dance works, *Witch Dance* and *Triadic Ballet*, will be closely analysed. Theoretically, Wigman championed Dionysian chaos and upheaval as a spur to her movement impulse, whose ideas were drawn in partial opposition to those produced by her mentor Rudolf Laban (Bradley, 2009: 2). Schlemmer, in turn, self-identified as an artist working toward an Apollonian aesthetic of order and abstraction, as most realised in his *Triadic Ballet* (1922), whose ideas drew influence from the avant-garde theories of Heinrich von Kleist (1777-1811), Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), and perhaps Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966). All three theorised a metaphysical ideal of the body and nature as most profoundly realised through abstraction (Kleist, 1972: 22-26; Kandinsky, 1966: 50; Craig, 1908-1910: 77). As with the methodological reasonings for carrying out a comparative study of Duncan and

Volynsky in chapter one, the dance figures in this chapter have also been paired because of their shared similarities and dissimilarities. In short, Schlemmer showed (1978: 118) a disdain for German expressive dance (which hereafter will be called modern dance) and he associated himself with ballet—as was the case with Volynsky. In contrast, and during Schlemmer's lifetime, Wigman (1975: 53) wrote critically of ballet and associated herself with modern dance as the vanguard art form—as was the case with Duncan. Most significantly, Schlemmer (1972: 69; 1977: 31) described modern dance as Dionysian, and ballet as Apollonian. Moreover, Schlemmer (1978: 118) argued that ballet offered the greatest possibilities for renovation through an abstraction of its romantic logos, and a forwarding of its purported scientific formal properties—articulated as *l'école de danse*. Given these details, Schlemmer and Volynsky are treated as ballet neo-classicists.

As with Duncan and Volynsky, Schlemmer and Wigman's writings will be considered through a comparative framework, but in this chapter the dance figures' writings will be examined separately in order to elaborate on their strong influences by Nietzsche, and other key, related figures. Schlemmer and Wigman's differing artistic perspectives are also analysed separately in order to provide a rich description of their touchstone works, *Triadic Ballet* and *Witch Dance II*. These works, it will be argued, articulated, respectively, the notion of ballet as Apollonian and the notion of modern dance as Dionysian. Like Duncan and Volynsky, Wigman and Schlemmer revealed a predilection to identify their aesthetic projects in

gendered terms: Theatrical dance, found Schlemmer (1989: 96)[39] possessed gravitas when it was a male-dominated project; modern dance, for Wigman (1975: 109), expressed an anti-heteronormative ethos of which women were its rightful leaders. Schlemmer and Wigman are also apt figures for a comparative study because they were Germans born two years apart who came to artistic maturity during the years of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933). Though they were not close colleagues, they knew of each other's work.[40] While Wigman worked almost continuously throughout her life, and died in 1973, Schlemmer's artistic output was irreparably halted by the Nazis in 1937, when his work was deemed to be degenerate (Schlemmer, 1972: 367). He died in 1943, horrified that his beloved homeland had collapsed once again into turmoil (Schlemmer, 1972: 401). In contrast, Wigman chose to embrace Nazi ideology that categorically flouted ideas of freedom—which she previously articulated as central to her creative impulse. As extensively documented by dance scholars Liliana Karina and Marion Kant (2014), Wigman's legacy is complicated by her collaboration until 1942 with the Third Reich's propogandist arts policy (Karina and Kant, 2014: 121, 147-148). It should be noted, however, that Wigman's work will only be analysed up to 1933, not because

[39] 'Date that historians consider highpoints,' Schlemmer wrote in September 1920, 'should rather be called declines: 1681, the first appearance of female dancers—until than female roles had been performed by men' (Schlemmer and Huneke, 1989: 96; Schlemmer cited in Koss 2003, 738).

[40] The Schlemmer scholar Karin von Maur included in her monograph a letter by Wigman in which she wrote that Schlemmer's August 1923 Dresden presentation of *Triadic Ballet* was an 'inspiration and signpost for modern performative art' (Maur, 1972: 197). In turn, Schlemmer mentioned Wigman, who had worked in the United States, in a 1937 letter while discussing the prospect of also finding work there (Schlemmer, 1972: 364).

her collaborations with The Third Reich are not relevant to her long career, but because this comparative study aims to focus on the distinct and productive periods in which self-identified ballet and a modern dance figures, such as Wigman and Schlemmer, were both making work simultaneously, and using Nietzsche's theories to explain their process and work.

In this chapter, Wigman's English language translations, specifically *Mary Wigman, The Language of Dance* (1966) and *The Mary Wigman Book, Her Writings* (1973), will be treated as key but incomplete documentation of the artist's self-understanding. That is because both texts, translated by her friend, the Viennese-born, New York-based dance writer Walter Sorell (1905-1997), make no mention of the Third Reich. These translated texts are nonetheless important because they have served as the foundation for knowledge about Wigman in the English language world, and thus its dance history curricula. What is also notable about many of Wigman's essays is that they lack dates, thus obfuscating how her thinking can be understood in context of the historical period; specifically, whether they were written before, during or after the Nazi era. In sum, Wigman's translated writings will be treated with the understanding that she is forwarding the most idealised vision of her work and her person. In terms of Schlemmer, the key texts for the analysis of his self-understanding are his compiled diaries, published in English in 1972, as overseen by his wife Tut, born Helena Tutein (1889-1987), as well as his *Man: Teaching Notes from the Bauhaus* (1971) and *The Mathematics of Dance* (1978). All three of Schlemmer's text were translated into English by

professionals, who, given the dates of their translations, likely did not know the artist. Nonetheless, because Tut Schlemmer controlled her husband's estate until 1974 and she lived until 1987, these texts must be understood as posthumous works overseen by a partial figure wishing to forward a burnished vision of the artist for posterity. Because Schlemmer and Wigman read Nietzsche in the original, their writings demonstrate a more nuanced absorption of the philosopher's ideas and concepts. In contrast to the readings of Nietzsche by Duncan and Volynsky, as well as Martin and Kirstein, it could be said that Schlemmer and Wigman fostered in their writings the most direct link to Nietzsche.

4.2 Wigman's Development of a Dionysian-oriented Creative Impulse

Wigman's *Witch Dance* is a key work for Wigman scholars. It can be perceived as a touchstone of her aesthetic, given that the choreographer performed versions of it from February 1914 until she retired from the stage at age 55 in 1942 (Kolb, 2016: 29; Karina and Kant, 2014: 147-148).[41] An analysis of a filmed fragment of Wigman's solo *Witch Dance II (Hexentanz)* will be undertaken in this section of this chapter. The choreographer's emerging Dionysian artistic identity, it will be argued, can be perceived in the images she constructed, whereby a mystic female comes into being through a performative tenor that is highly emotional. Logos, in *Witch Dance*, is absolutely beside the point. Wigman created a vision about the

[41] This approach of treating an early work of an artist's career as a defining moment in the artist's self-understanding has been carried out by Bernard Taper (1997). Taper discussed how George Balanchine's understood his early work *Apollon Musagète* as his aesthetic touchstone (Taper, 1997: 360).

value of irrational, impulsive, or, Dionysian forces.

Wigman's *Witch Dance* can also be understood as a radical distancing from her teacher Rudolf von Laban (1879-1958) with whom she worked intensively from 1913 to 1917 (Dörr, 2008: 56). Laban's drive to develop a logic-based language for categorising dance's principles, of which Wigman helped to facilitate, culminated in Laban Movement Analysis and Labanotation. According to the Laban dancer and choreographer Kurt Jooss, Laban 'believed in the salvation of the science of dancing' (Bradley, 2009: 2). Interestingly, Laban's discussed connection of the dancing body to scientific principles emerged the same year and season as Wigman's premiere of *Witch Dance* (1914). During that time, Laban wrote the following as part of an announcement for his Lake Maggiore-based movement workshops that were slated to take place in November and April of 1914:

> In every field, the technology and form necessary have triumphed, and the human body itself is the only thing that lags behind, not even as developed as its own tools…Our mental apparatus, our emotional apparatus and our muscular system can be superbly and consciously controlled and perfected.
> (Laban cited in Dörr, 2008: 38)

In this text, Laban argued for how the dancing body could be modernised through science ('technology') in order to develop a physicality of control and perfection. Laban also described in a quasi-neurobiological, as opposed to psychological, manner how emotions stem from the 'The muscles, nerves, and brain'; they, Laban continued, 'are the three centers where desires, feeling and knowledge manifest themselves' (Laban cited in Dörr, 2008: 38). Laban's writing about dance through

a neuroscientific lens, in which emotion is the raw material but not the desired product, is significant. Wigman, in contrast and as will be discussed, wrote about the necessity for wild and uncontrollable emotion as a means to produce art.

While Laban chose to describe his emerging dance project as a tension between the inchoate emotional body and a desire for scientific certainty, the author of *Der Moderne Tanz* (1917), Hans Branderberg (1885-1968), summarised Laban's 1914 Munich lecture, 'The Free Dance—The Dance without Music', by employing Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian binary formulations. Branderberg understood that Laban wished for

> The separation between body and mind [to be] abolished, but without abolishing the advantages of the long Apollonian period, in other words, those deriving from a specialization of faculties and capabilities. Rather, its disadvantages are eliminated, in that Apollonian spirituality is once again linked to the original Dionysian goal for mankind, a goal that is reveal as the only possible one for the future: the person as a whole.
>
> (Branderberg cited in Dörr, 2008: 39; Brandenberg, 1917: 41)

Branderberg's analysis of Laban's lecture demonstrates how Nietzsche had become a rhetorical portal for understanding the tension between the expressive and technical issues of which dance has always had to grapple. What is not clear, however, is whether Laban actually employed Nietzsche's formulations in the text of his lecture. It seems possible, given that in 1957 in London, Laban discussed dance art as if he were reading *BOT:*

> The bold approaching of the dream life is what the artist truly does… Art is a sublimation and condensation of the piecemeal insertion of the so-called irrational sparks and impulses into all thoughts and actions.
>
> (Laban cited in Bradley, 2009: 87)

One wonders how much Laban's discussion of the 'irrational sparks' of creativity, in 1914 and 1957, were a reflection of his thinking about Wigman, given that he, and then dance scholars, explained that Wigman had a 'terrible power while dancing' that was compared 'to a force of nature' (Laban, 1989 [1935]: 118; Dorr, 2008; 41-42; Branderberg, 1992: 127). Laban may have found Wigman's artistic potency and personality unsettling. She—compared to many of the key female figures of which Laban developed a strong artistic association with in the teens and twenties—was not his lover, bearer of his children or accepting of his 'slipping in and out of the arms of other women' (Preston-Dunlop, 1998: 30). Significantly, the Laban scholar Valerie Preston-Dunlop stated that 'Laban spurned Wigman's womanliness' (Preston-Dunlop; 1998: 30). This spurned feeling, it could be said, gave her a critical distance from Laban. His negation of her desirability also likely made her feel like an outsider in the female circle of which Laban held centre stage.

Because powerful women have, and continue to be called, witches, and because of the biographical details known about Wigman and Laban's relationship, it is not entirely surprising that she titled her first important work *Witch Dance*. In it Wigman showed the tension between Laban's controlled Apollonian theorisations and her fervent Dionysian expressionism, as each pitches the idea of harmony in opposite directions. The young dance artist premiered the solo on 11 February 1914 at the Museum of the Palais Porzia in Munich (Kolb, 2016: 29). It was created at Laban's school and was one of Wigman's first choreographic efforts that was

publicly presented. The work, according to Wigman's retrospective writings, received high praise from Laban (Wigman 1975: 36). Yet with Wigman's subsequent work, *Dance of the Straight and Curved Lines* (1914), Wigman recalled that Laban found her abstract solo lacking; his negative criticism enraged her (Wigman, 1975: 36). Moreover, *Dance of the Straight and Curved Lines* was closer in spirit to Laban's theoretical interests in that, according to Wigman, it focussed on the elements of movement. It is possible that Wigman was fictionalising this account, in which her abstract work was purportedly criticised by Laban, to highlight the differences between herself and her mentor (Wigman, 1975: 36). Laban, as was known, was hardly a calculating and reserved performer, solely focussed on identifying the formal properties of dance; for example, in a November 1925 published review of Laban's performance as the dark night in *Don Juan*, a *Die Dietsche Frau* journalist described how the group 'surges in Dionysian pleasure around the dark knight who stays in the midst of the crowd of exuberant admirers' (Cited in Bradley, 2009: 22). Laban's dancing, as borne out by photographs, reveals that he, like Wigman, was a Dionysian performer. But it was Wigman who was foremost assigned this role, as initially supported by Laban. For example, Laban organised in April 1915 a lecture demonstration in Zurich in which Wigman danced to excerpts from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* while he gave a 'lecture surveying dance history' (Preston-Dunlop, 1998: 39).

As is the case with the majority of early twentieth-century works, Wigman's *Witch*

Dance has been lost. Fortunately, a partial, later iteration, has been preserved (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtLSSuFlJ5c). This two-minute 1926 film fragment, titled *Witch Dance II*, continues to fascinate and has served as the subject of numerous scholarly critiques (Kolb, 2016: 26-43; Kant, 2011: 121-136; Hales, 2010: 317-332; Jones, 2010: 315, 319, 322, 323; Ragona, 1994: 47-62; Song, 2007: 427-437; Toepfer, 1997: 112-113; Odom, 1980: 84-90). In *Witch Dance II*, Wigman lurches forward while seated on the floor, moving her arms like rapiers as if to destroy the viewer. The solo is notable for its rage and violent intent. In the first moments of the filmed excerpt, Wigman appears to claw the fourth wall. She breaks through it with the sharp rotation of her hips. Consequently, her knees jaw open and her legs slam into the floor. Wigman's titling of her work makes clear that she is the witch, who is seen circling her head and torso above her pelvis as though casting a spell. It could be said that Wigman's seated, bent-leg position negates ballet's aesthetics, where the long line of an extended leg is perceived as expressive of the beautiful. Wigman's choreographic choices, as the solo develops, continues to counter balletic traditions. She locomotes her pelvis (as opposed to her feet) on the floor. The percussive action of her sitz bones lobbing her body forward bring to mind a male giant's heavy, certain gait, as opposed to the light quick steps of a female ballet dancer. Meanwhile, Wigman's arms provide a vision of bondage and then freedom: When she crosses one arm and then another, each time fastening her hand to her ankle, she becomes chained. When she releases her fastened arm, she cuts the space in two like a warrior.

Wigman wrote that she developed choreographic skills while under Laban's tutelage (Wigman, 1975: 40). As his student and then assistant, from 1913 to 1917 (Toepfer, 1997: 108), she put her body in the service of helping her mentor develop his movement analysis theory, which subsequently has been categorised into the terms body, effort, space and shape. According to one section of Wigman's retrospective writings, Laban's systematic approach for defining movement vexed her. At this time—in 1914 at Lake Maggiore, and just as the war had broken out—they were working together, and without others. Wigman wrote how Laban reacted with rage to her decision to imbue anger into his movement study 'the arc of anger', as opposed to following his directive to undramatically draw an arc 'from the center of [her] body diagonally backwards' (Dörr, 2008: 41). As heavily quoted by scholars, Laban yelled the following at Wigman after her demonstration:

> You clown, you grotesque monster, with your terrific intensity you ruin my whole theory of harmony!' He was furious about what he called my super-self-expression, declaring that the movement itself was wrath and needed no individual interpretation.
>
> (Wigman, 1975: 39)

In this passage, Wigman intimated that she, from the beginning, had an alternative vision to her mentor. She also signalled to the reader that she was never the dutiful (female) apprentice. Laban, moreover, comes across as a bit ridiculous in that he imagined an 'arc' of movement could adequately express the visual properties of anger. Significantly, Laban is characterised by Wigman as unnecessarily cruel: he found her disgusting, a 'grotesque monster' (Wigman, 1975: 39). In this passage, Wigman seemed to be signalling to the reader that other, more vital sources of inspiration, such as Nietzsche's ideas about dance, were on her horizon.

In 1917, Wigman chose to dance alone and again to Nietzsche's most Dionysian text *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Her solo at Zürich's Café des Banques was attended by a group of Dadaists, as affirmed by Richard Huelsenback in his *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* (1974). Huelsenbach wrote,

> She [Wigman] put on a special performance for us Dadaists and "danced Nietzsche." I can still see her in the center of a circle waving Zarathustra about. Left, right, left, right—"and conceived deeper than day".
>
> (Huelsenback, 1979: 11, cited in Odom 1980: 83)

Ten years later, in her 1927 essay 'Dance and the Modern Woman', Wigman wrote with a vocabulary that directly channelled Nietzsche's rousing text. While Wigman affirmed, 'dancing is an expression of higher vitality, confession of the present, experience of being, without any intellectual deviations', Nietzsche's Zarathustra states, 'There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom' (Wigman, 1927: 162-163; (Nietzsche, 1999: 38). Back in 1917, however, when Wigman 'danced Nietzsche' for the second time (the first time being in 1915 under Laban's supervision), it seems unlikely that she perceived her early choreographic efforts as expressive of profound wisdom, given that one year later, in 1918, Wigman had a psychological collapse (Manning, 2006: 59). Wigman wrote of her self-exile,

> Then I went into solitude, into a retreat in Switzerland, and I knew very well what I wanted. It was a religious community in which I had chosen to work.
>
> (Gamwell, 1999: 33; Wigman, 1975: 51)

As with Zarathustra, who exiled himself as a means of spiritual renewal, Wigman seemed to be describing her development similarly: during her retreat, she wished to emerge with the fortitude to articulate through dance 'the conflicts of mankind'

(Wigman, 1975: 51). In the following, she described her time in Swiss 'religious community' in an associative relationship not only to paganism but also to Catholicism:

> There was a nunnery nearby. I worked outdoors and, like the great Isadora Duncan, I believed that as much clothing as possible should be discarded, even to stockings and shoes […] I created dances which to me seemed expressive of the joys, sorrows, the conflicts of mankind, and finally I felt ready to come out of my nunlike [sic] solitude and dance for others.
>
> (Wigman, 1975: 51)

What is fascinating about this passage is that Wigman begins and ends her description alluding to the Christian ascetic tradition, but in the middle of her description she obfuscates those allusions by comparing her dance investigations to those of the famous pagan dancer, Isadora Duncan. Beloved by German audiences, Duncan cast off much of her clothing and performed with abandon to the alarm of a conservative Christian society. Moreover, she called herself a Dionysian and quoted Nietzsche (see chapter 3). In the above passage, Wigman's double speak—I am a rebel, I live like a nun-like saint—takes place. But there were times when she expressed herself in fairly plain language. For example, she said years later (specific date unknown) to Sorell about this period of her life: 'How difficult it was […] to find myself, to know what I wanted, to grow away from men like Laban, simply to become' (Wigman, 1975: 17). Following her break with her mentor, Wigman expressed her feelings of self-doubt about becoming a female, independent artist (Toepfer, 1997: 108). It could be said that she was contending with the symbolic death of her mentor Laban. Correspondingly, Zarathustra announced that God was dead. Nietzsche and Wigman advocated for a spiritually-driven dance, as symbolised in the figure of Zarathustra. He embraced the forces of

irrationality, he celebrated being an outsider.

Though Wigman mentioned being 'ill and in need' during her period of self-exile (Wigman, 1972: 51), she did not dwell on her vulnerability. Instead she narrated her independent artistic emergence through details, such as rejecting the offer of a male manager who wished to make her a 'star', and her efforts to make work borne out 'solitude' and 'conflicts' (Wigman, 1972: 51). She then narrated her transcendence, when she performed to great success

> in the city of Davos, some five thousand feet in the air, atop a mountain, the place Thomas Mann immortalized in his book *The Magic Mountain*.
>
> (Wigman, 1972: 50-51)

Wigman's mention of Mann's novel is significant, given that his book was inspired by Nietzsche's writing (Nehamas, 1971: 73), and because his protagonist evaluates modernity's ills at a mountaintop sanitorium. In the passages quoted above, Wigman seemed to be composing an identity, as did Duncan (2013: 65), built on three romantic and modernist artists. For Wigman, these writers were Duncan, Mann and Nietzsche. Yet, it is Nietzsche, through his inscription of the rebel hero, that figures most strongly in Wigman's ruminations about her art and life at this time. For example, Wigman described this 'terrible and wonderful' year (Wigman, 1972: 51) of artistic isolation and production much the way Nietzsche described the intrinsic necessity of terrible truth in *BOT*, which is made transcendent through art:

> True understanding, insight into the terrible truth, outweighs every motive for action, for Hamlet and Dionysiac man alike […] Aware of truth from a single glimpse of it, all man can see is the horror and absurdity of existence

> […] Here, in this supreme menace to the will, there approaches a redeeming, healing enchantress—art.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 39)

It could be said that Wigman intellectually and then physically followed Nietzsche's dictates. As discussed, her writings concern ecstatic creative impulses, lonely struggles and dance creations in the face of terrible conflicts—of which, in this instance, she described as happening on the mountain.

The romantic conceit whereby the mountain becomes the site of transcendence and creative power is one that is indebted, for Nietzsche, to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* (Del Caro, 2013: 117). For example, in Goethe's novel there is the *Walpurgisnacht* scene; it concerns the aging scholar Faust who has ecstatic visions on the mountain. Faust believes he can climb to the highest point of the Harz; he witnesses a witches' dance; he hallucinates his beloved Gretchen. Faust's vision of Gretchen makes him reckon with the terrible truth—that he has wronged her—and out of that terrible truth comes his revelation (which Goethe made into a work of art). Goethe wrote that the *Walpurgisnacht* scene occurred to him while hiking the Harz mountain range's highest peak (Williams in Nietzsche, 2001: 21-22). Nietzsche followed suit, writing that the 'unifying idea' in *Thus Came Zarathustra* also occurred to him from high; moreover, his testimonial of the mountain's power is equally as hallucinatory:

> '6,000 feet beyond man and time.' That day I was walking through the woods along the lake Silvaplana; at a massive, towering, pyramidal rock not far from

> Surlei I stopped. It was then that this idea came to me.[42]
>
> (Nietzsche, 2009: 15, cited in Löwith, 1997: 61)

It is arguable that Wigman couched her written discussion about her emergence on the mountain as an independent female choreographer, working apart from Laban's mentorship, to signal her alliance with this romantic canon in which the artist describes the mountain as terrifying, truth-inducing, transformative, and thus the site of creativity. For these three artists, Goethe, Nietzsche and Wigman, mountains also signified a departure from Christian patriarchal authority, whereby the yoke of order and restraint is cast off in order to discover 'true' self. In Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* (1889), written as a short introduction to his rebellious ideas, he called Faust the artist who 'created himself' (Nietzsche 2005: 49; Nehamas, 2002: 227). The Nietzsche scholar Adrian Del Caro argued that Nietzsche was not merely alluding to Goethe's *Faust* in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, he asserted that Nietzsche's text is a de facto conversation with Goethe's (Del Caro, 2013: 1). Wigman, who had received a solid literary education (Santos, 2009), seemed to have been conversant with Goethe and Nietzsche. Sorell confirmed their influences: on the day of her death, Wigman's translator and friend wrote an homage to the choreographer,

[42] According to Nietzsche scholar Karl Löwith, *Zarathustra*'s unifying idea is the author's concept of the eternal recurrence in which death is not an end, for those who refute the Christian afterlife, but a pagan cycle of destruction through creation. In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche wrote, 'Such an *experimental philosophy* as I live anticipates experimentally even the possibilities of fundamental nihilism; but this does not mean that it halts at a negation, a No, a will to the No. Rather, it wants to get through the reverse—to a *Dionysian Yes-saying* to the world as it is, without substration, exception of selection—it wants the eternal cycle: the same things, the same logic and illogic of entanglements. The highest state a philosopher can attain to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence—my formula for this is *amour fati* (Nietzsche, 1999, cited in Löwith, 1997: 59; italics, author's).

whereby he concluded that she was a 'Faustian' character because of her 'constant conflict' within herself; then, a few lines later, Sorell wrote, 'The way she pleaded to live life consciously and in a Dionysian manner, she showed courage' (Wigman, 1975: 19). Sorell's eulogy was published as the introduction to *The Mary Wigman Book*, the most extensive compilation of her writings translated into English. The text serves as a narrative in the service of solidifying Wigman's iconic stature, and it works to connect her stature to those of Goethe's and Nietzsche's. Wigman, as with the aforementioned German authors, wrote herself into a larger canon of thought. She succeeded by employing their ideas and recreating them through the medium of dance.

Wigman, Nietzsche and Goethe can also be discussed together because of their fascination with and treatments of the demonic. In Goethe's *Faust*, the eponymous hero is given the power to experience destruction and creation, and thus life as action (instead of contemplation), through the influence of the demon Mephistopheles. According to the Nietzsche scholar Michael Allen Gillespie, Goethe 'saw demonic individuals as forces of nature, unpredictable and uncontrollable by human beings, and yet playing a decisive role in shaping the course of human events' (Gillespie, 2005: 50). In his essay, Gillespie also contended that Nietzsche very much absorbed Goethe's characterisation of Mephistopheles. But Nietzsche changed the demon's character. Rather than attributing to him the ability to enact destruction and creation on a human being, Nietzsche characterised these attributes as stemming from a cultural reality and necessity, which he called the

Dionysian. Wigman, in turn, bridged Nietzsche's Dionysian ecstasy with Goethe's Christian demonic. This bridging is very much alluded to in Susan Manning's title of her book, *Ecstasy and the Demon: The Dances of Mary Wigman* (2006). Wigman's binding of the Christian and the pagan is made clear in Wigman's 1925 essay 'Composition', whereby she employed both Goethe and Nietzsche's language about destruction and creation. While discussing the fifth type of 'Emotional' composition, called the 'Elemental', Wigman wrote:

> They are the medium and symbol of those forces born of the soil. Their purest form is the demoniacal grotesque in all its variations… All sensations of anxiety, all chaotic conditions of despair arising from torment, hatred, or fury, grow in this medium of expression up to and beyond the boundaries of the purely human and blend themselves with inhuman, demoniacal violence.
>
> (Wigman, 1975: 93)

On the surface, Wigman's language appears to primarily work within the context of Christian allusions to evil because of her repetition of the word demon. Yet it is the word 'Elemental' that she chose to describe this form of composition, and it is far more Nietzschean sounding because, as she explained, the demonic is from the earth ('the soil')—instead of hell—thereby denoting it as having a pagan sensibility. Wigman's demonic forces ('torment, hatred, or fury') are emotionally-laden words, and they, she argued, what provided the impulse for her 'Elemental' dance compositions—which she did not characterise as evil. Significantly, these 'demoniacal grotesque' choreographic forces do not act upon Wigman like an outside agent. Instead they 'arise' out her feelings and they 'blend themselves with the inhuman'. This physical merging of the mortal (the human artist) and immortal (the demon) is not very Christian. Instead this merging of the creative

human and a god-like power is what, according to Nietzsche, those participating in the religious festival The Great Dionysia experienced. In *BOT* Nietzsche wrote,

> Singing and dancing, man expresses his sense of belonging to a higher community… there now sounds out from within him something supernatural: he feels himself to be a god, he himself now moves in such ecstasy and sublimity as once he saw the gods move in his dreams. Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 18)

As if following Nietzsche's directives, Wigman intimated how she became art—the creative human who merges with the inhuman, the immortal divine. Behind Nietzsche's supposition about the creation of art through the intertwining of two realms is the myth of Dionysus: He was born from his immortal father Zeus and his human mother Semele. Wigman's language seems to 'dance' with what is known about Dionysus. As mentioned, Dionysus's female dancing cult rebelled against the patriarchy through their orgiastic rites on the mountain. Wigman, a dancing rebel, seemed to be associating herself with Dionysian myth. If she were a contemporary choreographer writing today, she might have written that she perceived herself as a female choreographer whose dancing flouts images of mainstream media's depiction of women, as described by the journalist Susan Faludi in *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991); that her choreograph impulse stemmed, in part, from the anger of not being treated as equal to a man; and that she identified with the devil because he too deified patriarchy (God).[43]

[43] The political scientist Sue Thomas writes, 'Faludi argued that a backlash against American women was rampant in popular culture, politics, psychology, and the media. In the 1980s, it took the form of an argument that women had won the rights they were seeking, but that the results had made them "miserable." The foundation of the 1980s backlash was a focus on what "equality" took away from women--

However, Wigman, a modern dance artist of the early twentieth century, wrote with metaphors that gestured, like her dancing, towards other worlds and eras. Nietzsche, in this regard, could be described as Wigman's patron 'saint'. In Nietzsche's *BOT*, and his later texts, he displaced the fearsome Christian demon and the moralistic saint with the artistic Dionysus and Apollo. They, Nietzsche argued, are Western culture's true agonistic figures. Nietzsche then presented Dionysian destruction and chaos as more than transformative, but as laudatory qualities. Wigman's *Witch Dance II* appears to express this attitude. Her characterisation of the witch, as discussed in the film excerpt, can be more likened to the androgynous Dionysus, who in *The Bacchae*, takes on patriarchal authority and whose female followers rip apart the King of Thebes, limb from limb. In *Witch Dance II,* Wigman's arms are her weapons. Her thighs don't offer themselves to the viewer. They slam into the floor, like stone slabs, positioned for the creation of a new house of worship.

In *BOT* Nietzsche perceived gender as a social construction through his discussion of the semiotically ambiguous nature of gender (for a more elaborate discussion on Nietzsche and gender, see chapter 2). His perspective influenced proto-feminist German leaders, such as Hedwig Dohm, Helene Lange and Helene Stöcker, who in the late-nineteenth century were calling for women's increased participation in a

"femininity" and all that goes with it, especially attractiveness, marriage, and fulfillment through full-time, year-round child rearing. Women, it was asserted, needed to turn away from feminism' (Thomas, 2008: 617).

male-dominated society (Diethe, 1996; Helm, 2004; Oppel, 2005; Thomas, 1983). Three decades later, in the Weimar Republic of Wigman's time, women were breaking down barriers: In 1918 they won the right to vote; by 1925 they made up 36 percent of the workforce (Hales, 2010: 318). Yet at the same time, according to the German cultural studies scholar Barbara Hales, women's increased power became the subject of popular and pseudo-scientific articles. In these texts, writers associated the *die neue Frau*'s (the New Woman) with the demonic female who possesses occult powers (Hales, 2010: 319). Hales connected the *die neue Frau*'s arrival to the import, and impact, of Wigman's *Witch Dance II* (Hales, 2010: 320-322). Wigman's witch, like the single working women who earned new freedoms, had a monstrous potentiality. *Witch Dance II* can be interpreted as a danced rendering of the Weimar Republic female's progress and its consequent effect—fear. Woman's power, as Hales detailed, was depicted in popular media as threateningly magical, and thus irrational. Wigman's solo, about a witch with occult powers, seemed to parlay these ideas: The witch's claw-like hands make incantation-like gestures which seem to emanate from her pelvis. She is casting a chthonic spell.

Wigman's decision to dance masked in *Witch Dance II* connected her work to ancient theatrical traditions, of which Nietzsche discussed. In section 10 pf *BOT*, Nietzsche wrote how the audience at The Great Dionysia,

> Involuntarily… transferred on to that masked figure the whole image of the god which he saw trembling magically before his soul, and he dissolved, so

> to speak, the reality of the figure into a ghostly unreality. This is the Apolline dream-state…
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 45)

In this passage, Nietzsche suggested that the masked actor brings into being the Apollonian; and because the performer casts a spell on the audience, it readies the audience for Dionysian truth. Nietzsche wrote,

> Conversely, those appearances of the Sophoclean hero in images of light, in other words, the Apolline quality of the mask, are the necessary result of gazing into the inner, terrible depths of nature.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 46)

As noted, Wigman described her separation from Laban and his community as a 'terrible and wonderful' year, and her 'Elemental' style of dance composition as being borne of out of 'torment, hatred or fury' (Wigman, 1975: 51, 93). *Witch Dance II* can be read as expressive of Nietzsche's binary: The mask's smooth, white, porcelain exterior expresses Apollonian serenity; the volatility of her shape-shifting body expresses Dionysian turbulence. In *BOT*, Nietzsche then argued that the mask ultimately represented the suffering god Dionysos, who he deemed the seminal hero of Greek tragedy:

> It is a matter of indisputable record that the only subject-matter of Greek tragedy, in its earliest form, was the suffering of Dionysos, and that for a long time the only hero on the stage was, accordingly Dionysos. But one may also say with equal certainty that, right down to Euripides, Dionysos never ceased to be the tragic hero, and that all the famous figures of the Greek stage, Prometheus, Oedipus, etc., are merely masks of the original hero, Dionysos.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 51)

Though Nietzsche previously discussed the mask as symbolic of the Apollonian idealised dream world, in this passage he stated that the mask is, foremost, a metaphor for society. The mask is the socialised face, the one that hides, as in the case with Wigman, her more complex identity. The mask, for Nietzsche, is a heroic

and false façade: behind the myths of the male heroes Prometheus and Oedipus, lay the transgressive, androgynous figure, Dionysius, who wreaks havoc on order. Dionysus, the unmasked hero, expresses the true condition of the human experience, which is Dionysian.

Witches are also hidden figures, and when they strike, they too break rules. They, in certain ways, are the opposite of the ballerina. Wigman found the ballerina, even before her creation of *Witch Dance II*, to be oppressive to her creative being. She described her aesthetic project in the years leading up to World War II in relation, and opposition, to ballet. Franko has pointed out that this strategy was not unique, but generously employed by female modern dancers in the first half of the twentieth century (Franko, 2016; 2002: 109). Wigman's oppositional stance to ballet resided not only in her movement vocabulary for *Witch Dance II*, but also in her radically different portrait of a witch. Unlike the witches in the celebrated nineteenth-century ballets *La Sylphide* and *Sleeping Beauty*, Wigman's is not old and wizened nor does she serve as a counterpoint, or foil, to a maiden figure who is a symbol of erotic desire. In 'Reminiscenses (sic), first public appearances', circa 1919, Wigman wrote of how, 'You need no airy body, no dainty, nimble feet, no double-jointed spine for the modern dance' (Wigman, 1975: 53). In a later writing, 1930-1931, Wigman underscored the modern dancer's relationship to the earth:

> The old ballet school seemed always to be concerned with the heavens. It spurned the earth… The new art, on the other hand, has the dancer's feet planted firmly on the ground as if the protagonist wanted to say, "Here I am.

Here I'll stand. Let fate do what it will!"

(Wigman, 1975: 140)

It should be remembered that Wigman was not initially encouraged by her mentor Laban to become a performer; coming from the Dalcroze School with a teaching certificate, she had been slated for a pedagogical career (Wigman, 1975: 40). In her above statement, however, she pronounced herself a dancer, not a teacher, and she dismissed ballet, with its emphasis on ethereality and flexibility. Her disdain for the form was not so surprising, given that she began her movement training at 24, an age in which professionalising in ballet was an impossibility. This was not entirely the case for men, who were prized for possessing a more grounded strength in order to partner ballerinas. And so, it could not have escaped Wigman's notice that Laban's male protegee Kurt Jooss—who began performing featured roles in Laban's works in 1921 and who never broke with Laban—supported the stylistic integration of ballet and modern dance (Häger, 1998). In contrast to Jooss, Wigman explained in a 1927 essay, 'Stage Dance', that ballet dancers are not 'only differently trained, are no longer able to justify the spirit of our time' (Wigman, 1975: 109).[44] This 'spirit of the time' may have been code for The New Woman.

By 1927, Wigman and Laban were describing ballet, in the increasingly unstable

[44] Though Wigman spurned ballet in the first decades of her career, she experienced a change of heart. In 1968, she wrote, 'Twentieth-century ballet has made good use of some of the ideas and means of the modern dance and, through it, it has reached new heights' (Wigman, 1975: 196). Like many of her European contemporaries in the 1960s, Wigman may have been acknowledging the confluence of modern dance and ballet techniques in choreographic practice.

political environment of the Weimar Republic, as being decadent in that it did not represent German culture. The former ballet dancer Lilian Karina, who performed in Germany, pointed out that ballet in these years was being criticised as foreign and even Jewish (Karina and Kant, 2016: 89).[45] Thus, the historical antagonism between modern dance and ballet, which began with criticism of ballet by modern dance pioneer Isadora Duncan, ratcheted up in the Weimar Republic and The Third Reich. This antagonism was strengthened by the willingness of German modern dance leaders—including Laban, Wigman, and Gret Palucca—to present their aesthetic projects as thoroughly German (Karina and Kant, 2014: 96). In contrast to these German modern dancers, ballet dancers working in Germany did not perceive their art form as expressive of one nation or as fortifying the National Socialist spirit. How could they? Ballet was and continues to be a multi-national language.

Despite Wigman's castigation of ballet, she nonetheless can be credited with providing a necessary critique of how western theatrical dance harnessed and reified gender roles. Wigman never performed the dancing coquette or the female victim, roles which are numerously apportioned in nineteenth-century ballets. According to Manning (2006: 100, 141-146), her early dances such as *The Seven Dances of Life* (1921), and *Storm Song* solo from *Shifting Landscape* (1929),

[45] Despite Wigman's dismissal of ballet, her demand for expressiveness, perception of dance as a ritualistic and mystic practice, and her wish to be a leader (a female leader no less) did not sit well the Reich's Department of Propaganda, directed by Joseph Goebells (Karina and Kant, 2014: 131-132).

forwarded visions of powerful women, often through a forceful movement vocabulary that was, in one instance, identified as horrifyingly masculine (as will be discussed below). By rebuking the idea that there existed a biological relationship between the female and the social construction of the feminine, Wigman was a pioneer in dance. Nietzsche, as previously mentioned, also questioned the social construction of gender. In the first pages of *BOT*, he wrote,

> We divide things up by gender, describing a tree as masculine and a plant as feminine—how arbitrary these translations are! How far they have flown beyond the canon of certainty!'
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 143)

Not everyone appreciated Wigman's dismantling of gender stereotypes. For example, Wigman described how Laban, after seeing her solo concert at Zürich's Pfauen Theater in spring 1919, bent his knee to her and said, 'Dear Wigman, though there was only one really harmonious movement in the whole program, I admit that you are a dancer, you may even be a great dancer' (Laban cited in Wigman, 1975: 40). Laban words are found in the context of Wigman's retrospective writings, in which she described her challenges becoming a female dance artist. Thus, Laban's statement about her lack of harmony does not bring to mind his theory of harmony in choreography. Rather Laban's statement come across as an assessment of Wigman's dancing. That it, and she, is not feminine enough.

For central European bohemians during the Weimar years, wrote the art historian Maud Lavin, it was not femininity but androgyny that had become *à la mode* with the younger set, who had been born well after Laban (Lavin, 1990: 63-86). Toward

this youthful, bohemian zeitgeist, Wigman's forceful dance might have gestured. Indeed, by the 1930s she had become famous for her intensity, and during this time the impresario Sol Hurok had contracted her to tour the United States (Robinson, 1995). Yet for the ultra-conservative, older and influential Russo-Parisian dance critic André Levinson, androgyny was cause for disgust, especially is respect to the dancing of Wigman and her all-female troupe. In Levinson's essay 'The Modern Dance in Germany' (1929), he wrote,

> Mannish, positive, wide of womb, robustly under-pinned, she functions forcefully and frankly. These neutral nymphs often affect the masculine uniform—a blouse and trousers to the ankle, or the trunks of the gymnast which leave the muscular flanks free. Their ejaculatory movements forbid grace or fragility.
>
> (Levinson, 1991: 103)

In his description, Levinson described Wigman's all-female troupe as being as powerful as men, with legs that reminded him of men ejaculating! He also described Wigman's female dancers as 'neutral nymphs'. This too is an insult. Nymphs, or female forest creatures, are the subject of the famous ballet *La Sylphide*, among other romantic ballets. Nymphs transfix men and make them mad with desire. To be a 'neutral nymph' is to be a female creature who evokes no feelings of sexual desire, and that, implied Levinson, is the ballerina's role. Levinson's tone is very clear: androgynous females not only disturbed him, they enraged him. Wigman's trans-sexual choreography flouted conventions, according to Levinson. She neutered women, or even worse, turned them into semen-shooting men.

In the following section, Nietzsche's theory of the creative impulse, which concerns the interdependence of Dionysian chaos and Apollonian harmony to produce art, will be shown as threading through Wigman's writing. Perhaps the most famous example of her absorption of Nietzsche's theory is articulated in her essay 'The Language of Dance':

> Creativity belongs to the sphere of reality as much as to the realm of fantasy. And *there are always two currents, two circles of tension, which magnetically attract one another, flash up and oscillate together until, completely attuned, they penetrate one another*: on the other hand, the creative readiness which evokes the image; on the other hand, the will to act whipped up to a point of obsession, that which takes possession of the image and transforms its yet fleeting matter into malleable working substance in order to give its final form in the crucible of molding.
>
> (Wigman, 1966: 12; italics, mine)

Wigman's description of two circles penetrating each other to create an artistic 'crucible', echoes the first pages of Nietzsche's *BOT* in which he described tragedy, the highest form of art, as being born from the sexual union of two male gods, Dionysus and Apollo:

> *These two very different drives* [the Apollonian and the Dionysian] *exist side by side, mostly in open conflict, stimulating and provoking one another to give birth to ever-new, more vigorous offspring* in whom they perpetuate the conflict inherent in the opposition between them, an opposition only apparently bridged by the common term 'art'—until eventually, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic 'Will', they appear paired and, in this pairing, finally engender a work of art which is Dionysiac and Apolline in equal measure: Attic tragedy.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 14, italics, mine)

While Nietzsche described, in the above, two 'different drives' giving 'birth' to produce 'vigorous offspring' (tragedy), Wigman described, in the above, 'reality'

and ‘fantasy’ as equally penetrating each other to create a ‘crucible’—a place in which ‘concentrated forces interact to cause […] something new’ (Merriam-Webster, 2018). Wigman’s pairing of ‘reality’ and ‘fantasy’ was described by Nietzsche as the Apollonian and the Dionysian: the dreams of Apollo reveal reality; the antics of Dionysus create fantasy—which in Ancient Greek means to make visible.

Of course, Wigman was one of many artists, Freud included[46], who reformulated Nietzsche’s seminal theory, but her language is nonetheless distinctive for how closely she sets up Nietzsche’s oppositions—in which there exist two forces, reality and fantasy, that give birth to creation through the will of the artist. Nowhere in the history of Western concert dance, as far as this writer is aware, has there been as clear a re-articulation of Nietzsche’s theory of artistic creation as in Wigman’s ‘The Language of Dance’. Another instance in which Wigman discussed dance as though she was carrying around a copy of *BOT* occurred during her 1949 lecture in Zürich. In her discussion, she described not only the artist’s experience but the observers’:

> In these rare moments you carry the blazing torch which emits the spark jumping from the “I” to the “We”, from the dancer to the spectator. This is the moment of divine consummation, when the fire dances between two poles, when the personal experience of the creator is communicated to those who watch.

[46] According to the psychiatrist and Nietzsche scholar Eva Cybulska, ‘Nietzsche's (1872/1993) celebrated dichotomy of the Dionysian and the Apollonian forces from his *The Birth of Tragedy* (deeply influenced by Schopenhauer) prefigured Freud's id and ego’ (Cybulska, 2015: 3).

(Wigman, 1975: 170)

In *BOT*, Nietzsche described the effect of the Dionysian choral ritual on its audience in similar terms: 'Thus the dithyrambic servant of Dionysus can only be understood by its own kind! With what astonishment the Apolline Greek must have regarded him!' (Nietzsche, 1999: 21). For Nietzsche, the Apolline observer of the Dionysian mystic rite is what consecrates Greek tragedy. Moreover, the observers' witnessing of Dionysian destruction solidifies the community through its understanding of universal struggle as articulated in the protagonist's demise. For Wigman, the performer and the observer also forge a community when watching her dance. Yet instead of the reaction to her work being astonishment, which for Nietzsche meant revelation, Wigman employed the word 'spark'. She wrote that a 'spark' occurred with the transmission from one pole (the artist's performance) to the other end of the pole (the observer's witness of it). This 'spark' ignited a 'mystic rite', a ritual form of communication, that produced 'divine consummation' through the dance (Wigman, 1975: 170).

Though Wigman incorporated Nietzsche's ideas from *BOT* and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* into her choreographic philosophy, she never employed, in the English translations of her writings, the words Apollonian or Dionysian, nor did she name Nietzsche. It might have been that she preferred readers to understand her artistic self-formulation as her own, as opposed to descending from the widely-read male philosopher of her youth, or it might have been that she extricated Nietzsche's name in her texts following the Nazi party's manipulation of Nietzsche's ideas. That

said, Wigman repeatedly employed Nietzsche's phraseology in her published collection of essays, which span (in English translation) from 1913 to 1946. For example, the words 'ecstatic' (Wigman, 1975: 52, 96, 103), 'intoxication' (Wigman, 1975: 52), 'chaotic' (Wigman, 1975: 86, 93, 102), and the 'creative impulse' (Wigman, 1975: 81) repeatedly and forcefully describe her dancing philosophy. The choreographer's famous slogan—'Without ecstasy no dance! Without form no dance!' (Wigman, 1975: 88)—is one that clearly adheres to the Dionysian-Apollonian binary created by Nietzsche in which the irrationality of 'ecstasy' and the logic of 'form' are key to art. They played duelling roles in Wigman's creative process.

Like Nietzsche, who devised a story about agonistic gods who give birth to tragedy, Wigman provided her own origin myth for *Witch Dance II.* It seems indebted to Nietzsche, and to Ancient Greek tragedy—specifically to the *The Bacchae*. In Euripides' play, the Asian female dancing cult led by Dionysus is described as an intoxicated group of semi-clad women who are violent. In 1958, Wigman similarly narrated the origins of *Witch Dance II* to a group of assembled female dancers in Pasadena, California. In her story she becomes a savage, half-naked bacchante whose ecstatic dancing seems to be inspired by nocturnal forces:

> I couldn't sleep for anything in the world. Finally, I flung myself out of bed. I began to dance; I improvised wildly until I was through. On my way back to bed I passed the three-part mirror where I tried out my costumes. While passing I saw in it a creature. One shoulder and one breast were bare. Tch, tch, tch—the shawl! I left my hair wild.
>
> (Wigman, 1975: 186)

At the end of Wigman's narrative, she has a revelation: In the mirror, she sees her transformation into a wild, bare-breasted 'creature'. In *The Bacchae*, this revelation is given to Agave, the mother of Pentheus. She realises that she has not brought back to the city a lion's head, but her son's. Her violent ecstasy on the mountaintop has transformed her from a maternal figure into a killer of men. She is banished from Thebes and joins Dionysus's dancing cult of women, for good. Wigman's narrative of the origins of *Witch Dance II* makes no mention of its earlier iteration under the guidance of Laban. Instead, it furthers a dialectic about the subversive freedoms of modern dance, an emerging art form of which women at that time were its leaders and its primary participants. To be a modern dancer in 1950s America, when she gave her talk in California, was to set oneself apart from the larger bourgeois (patriarchal) world. It was an exciting frontier, full, as Wigman implies, of rebellious self-discoveries.

Wigman's development and maturation as a choreographer were bracketed by the violence of two world wars. In the 1943 Liepzig bombings by the Allied Powers, which left 1,800 people dead (Nixon, 2017: 9), Wigman was living in the city's heart. Instead of seeking shelters with her neighbours in the basement of her apartment building, Wigman sat at her window, mesmerised by the sight of the aerial bombing. She apparently told Sorell, 'I am ashamed of admitting it. But at this terrifying sight I feel inspired to do something creatively' (Wigman, 1975: 163). In this passage, Wigman demonstrated her receptivity to chaos, her radical

Dionysianism in which destruction is a prelude to creation. She showed her desire to reveal this side of herself, and to promote this side in the hagiographic writings that she and Sorell deemed suitable for English-language publication.

4.3 Schlemmer's Development of an Apollonian Aesthetic

Unlike Wigman, Oskar Schlemmer did not find chaos inspiring. In his published diary entries and letters, he raged against the violence wrought by the Great War; he called his experience of being a soldier 'four years of systematic dehumanization'; he, among tens of millions, suffered physical injuries (Schlemmer, 1972: 61; Elswit, 2014: fn. 18). Schlemmer's experience gave him a distaste for tumult (Paret, 2014: 172). In a 1919 diary entry, penned a year after the armistice, he put his thoughts about chaos into focus while describing his artistic goals:

> Now comes—must come—the purification, pure form, the combination of both possibilities. Mastery, classic form, the steady compass. I must succeed, will succeed, if I fix my attention only on the essential and refuse to let myself be drawn into turmoil and confusion, which only alienate me from myself.
> (Schlemmer, 1972: 66)

Schlemmer, it will be argued, sought to develop a creative life that articulated an essentialist aesthetic order. His foundational work for this project seemed to be *Triadic Ballet* (*Das Triadisches Ballett*) of which he developed over two decades, as was the case with Wigman's *Witch Dance II*. And while Wigman articulated an understanding of her solo through Nietzsche's Dionysian conceptualisations, it will be shown how Schlemmer discussed *Triadic Ballet* through a Nietzschean Apollonian framework. As demonstrated, Wigman helped to pioneer a philosophical aesthetic for modern dance based on a choreographic practice drawn

from an ecstatic creative impulse that, in respect to *Witch Dance II*, overturned heteronormative depictions of the feminine. It will be argued that, correspondingly, Schlemmer pioneered a philosophical aesthetic for neoclassical ballet in *Triadic Ballet*. Its costumes, still extant, transformed the dancers into futuristic design elements that nonetheless reified gendered norms. The male costumes evoke the soldier, the clown and the superman; the female costumes evoke the ballerina, the maiden, and the muse. The simplicity of Schlemmer's choreography in conjunction with the masking and hi-tech costuming of its dancers produced an idealised dreamscape, of which Nietzsche described as Apollonian. In regard to this project's larger argument—that Dionysian values shaped a philosophy of early twentieth-century modern dance while Apollonian values shaped a philosophy of ballet that give rise to a neoclassical aesthetic—the written ideas of Wigman and Schlemmer are important. They support this project's primary argument.

The trajectory of the factual aspects of *Triadic Ballet* and its development are as follows: It was partially envisioned by Schlemmer in 1912; it was danced once in 1916, with its first and most significant cast, which included experimental former Stuttgart opera ballet dancers Albert Burger and Elsa Hötzel (Elswit, 2014: 30); *Triadic Ballet* was then restructured in 1920, with the creation of the now-heralded and extant costumes, which rendered the dancers into futuristic yet gendered conceptualisations. Finally, in 1922, it had its most successful realisation through a handful of performances in Germany. In 1932, it won sixth place (bronze) out of twenty works performed at the International Dance Congress in Paris, despite the

fact that parts of the music and scenery had not arrived in time (Schlemmer, 1972: 50, 125; Trimingham, 2012: 84; Maur, 2014: 194, 201).

Before Schlemmer's absorption of Nietzsche's Apollonian conceptualisation is discussed in detail, the influence of specific ideas articulated by Kleist, Kandinsky and Craig will be summarised. They too appeared to shape Schlemmer's artistic development and self-understanding. In his diaries, Schlemmer (1972: 57, 126, 143, 197) expressed an enduring fascination with Kleist's 'About the Marionette Theater' (1810) in which the character, Herr C., 'the leading dancer at the opera house', argues that a puppet's movements are more graceful and pure than a dancer's (Kleist, 1972: 22). Schlemmer's interest in Kleist has been the subject of several scholarly critiques (Scheyer, 1970: 29; Franko, 2015: 146-147; Elswit, 2014). According to the dance scholar Kate Elswit,

> Schlemmer admired the "fail-safe; working performance of the machine which knows no exhaustion" and described how he would have to copy Kleist's essay word-for-word in order to demonstrate what Kleist penetratingly represented: that "the distinction, if the not the superiority of the soulless mechanics of the puppet is evident compared with the human body".
>
> (Schlemmer cited in Elswit, 2014: 38; Schlemmer, 1927: 82)

Schlemmer made these praising comments about Kleist's dancing marionette in his 1927 essay 'Mechanisches Ballet'. Five years earlier, and directly before the Stuttgart premiere of *Triadic Ballet*, Schlemmer publicly recited sections of Kleist's essay (Elswit, 2014: 38). Kleist's theory, concerning the technological grace of the dancing marionette, might have inspired Schlemmer's technological focus for his ballet. One could say that Kleist created a vision in which the puppet's strings

operate like an elliptical conveyer, controlled by the puppet master, who behaves like an artistic foreman. The notion of a human working in harmony with a machine produced for Kleist a spiritual ideal: the mechanised performer knows no fatigue and shows no physical effort—like a transcendent being (Kleist, 1972: 24). Schlemmer, as noted, admired this 'fail-safe' technology of this type of performance. Arguably, he actualised it through his *Triadic Ballet* costumes, which were made from the new combined technologies of plastic, metal and wire, developed during the Great War (Elswit, 2014: 45). They made the dancer appear beyond human. Kleist and Schlemmer seemed to have shared a fascination with how to transcend human fragility and corruption. In the midst of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815), Kleist wrote about the purity of the inhuman dancing figure. Similarly, Schlemmer began working on *Triadic Ballet* after World War I. Its dancers can be understood as renovated humans, constructed out of repurposed war technology. As will be discussed, one of them appeared to herald a future in which chaos had been eliminated.

In 1920, Schlemmer found an artistic home at The Bauhaus (1919-1933), a school and professional community known, in its early years, for supporting radical experimentation (Schlemmer, 1972: 89). In 1922, the heralded Russian non-objective painter Wassily Kandinsky joined The Bauhaus (Kandinsky, 1966: 6). His reputation was preceded by his seminal text, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912). In it, Kandinsky argued that non-objective painting should be understood as a 'new spirit', one that is 'going hand in hand with thought toward an *epoch of great*

spirituality' (Kandinsky, 1966: 77, italics, author's). Kandinsky' belief that non-objective art had the capacity to change society was, of course, first articulated by Nietzsche in respect to Greek tragedy (Nietzsche, 1999: 15). According to Kandinsky, non-objective art was one in which colour and form expressed the inner spirit; the traditions of portraiture and landscape painting were forfeited for exploration of unknown forms (Kandinsky, 1966). As will be discussed, Schlemmer absorbed Kandinsky's concept of abstract art as a means for cultural renovation in his dance project; he applied his colleague's colour theory to *Triadic Ballet*; he harkened to Kandinsky's discussion about the intrinsic connection between abstraction of the body and purity:

> The freer the abstract form, the purer and more primitive the vibration. Therefore, in any composition where corporeal form seems superfluous it may be replaced by abstract or semi-abstract form.
>
> (Kandinsky, 1966: 50)

Schlemmer's costumes, which restricted the dancers' movement and semi-abstracted their bodies, could be understood as the means to transcend the 'superfluous' in order to create a purer energetic vibration.

Schlemmer first mentioned Kandinsky and Kleist in his 1918 diary entries (1972: 59, 47). Five years later, in 1923, The Bauhaus school gave him the directorship of its theatre workshop (Ferranti, 2004: 37). Given Schlemmer's role in the dramatic arts, it is entirely possible that he was familiar with 'The Actor and the Übermarionette' (1908). It was written by the avant-garde theatre director and designer Edward Gordon Craig, who founded *The Mask* (1908-1929), an international theatre

magazine. Craig demonstrated influences from not only Kleist but also from Nietzsche. Following Kleist, Craig heatedly advocated for 'getting rid of emotion and subjectivity' in order to 'reach some kind of spiritual, universal truth' in the theatre (Degli Esposti, 2015: 21). Following Nietzsche, Craig renamed Kleist's dancing figure the 'Übermarionette'. (Nietzsche's discussion of Übermensch is found in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.) Because Craig described the Übermarionette as 'an entirely new performer' who is a 'descendent of the stone images of the old temples', it could be said that Craig was marrying Nietzsche's call for a renovation of the arts—based on his thinking about Ancient Greek tragedy—to Kleist's proposal for the creation of a new kind of non-emotional performer (Craig cited in Innes, 1998: 294). Following this line of thinking, Craig also wrote, 'I wish to remove the *Actor* with his *Personality* but leave the *Chorus of masked figures* (Craig, 1908-1910: 77, italics, author's). As with Craig, Schlemmer masked and, consequently, depersonalised his dancers; he also conceptualised *Triadic Ballet* in relationship to Ancient Greek statuary (Schlemmer, 1972: 29). Craig's, Kandinsky's and Kleist's ideas impacted Schlemmer's aesthetic development, but Nietzsche's ideas loomed larger, specifically his Apollonian theorisations, as will now be discussed.

According to several scholars, *Triadic Ballet* demonstrated Schlemmer's equal embrace of Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian aesthetics (Scheyer, 1970: 48; Trimingham, 2012: 2; Bukhari, 2011: 11). These scholars' perspective, however, is arguable. It seems to be in the service of demonstrating that *Triadic Ballet's* artistic value is akin to Ancient Greek tragedy, of which Nietzsche deemed was the highest

form of cultural and artistic expression. It is this writer's contention that *Triadic Ballet* does not approximate tragedy, nor does it harmonise Nietzsche's binary terms—and that is the very reason why it is so interesting to the development of dance. This unorthodox argument of mine will be carried out through a careful analysis of Schlemmer's writings about dance, many of which stemmed from the letters he wrote to his close friend Otto Meyer-Amden (a Swiss painter who, like Schlemmer, studied visual art at the Stuttgart Academy and who, after the first World War, became a spiritual recluse). Also to be discussed is Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* drawings and the 1968 filmed construction of *Triadic Ballet*, created by Margarete Hastings, Franz Schömbs, and Georg Verden.[47]

Schlemmer's writing about *Triadic Ballet* spanned from 1912 to 1938— from when he was 24 to when he was 50 years old (he died at 55). Like Volynsky, Schlemmer had no extensive formation in dance, although there is some evidence that he was taking ballet classes circa 1916, when he was approximately twenty-eight-years old (Trimingham, 2012: 84). Schlemmer's lack of expertise in ballet did not thwart him from choreographing. Quite the opposite. It provided him with a tabula rasa. Schlemmer first wrote about making a ballet in a 1912 entry of his diary.[48] In it he

[47] The performers in Hastings's 1968 reconstruction of *Triadic Ballet* are Edith Demharter, Ralph Smolik, and Hannes Winkler. Tut Schlemmer, the choreographer's wife, is credited as an artistic advisor. The music composition by Erich Ferstl was made for, or adapted into, the reconstruction. For a discussion of the music Schlemmer used in the various iterations of his ballet, see Maur (2014).

[48] It seems significant that Tut Schlemmer, the artist's wife and his editor, chose to include this dance-related entry in the first pages of *The Diaries and Letters of Oskar Schlemmer*. Perhaps she wished to underscore her husband's legacy as a dance

stated that his impulse was to choreograph a 'Russian ballet, the basis of its success' (Schlemmer, 1972: 7). What then was successful about Russian ballet for Schlemmer? It is not clear, but by 1910, Diaghilev's Ballets Russes was touring in the European capital cities.

In Berlin, the Ballets Russes work *Le Carnaval*, reworked by Michel Fokine from his original production, had its premiere at the Theater des Westens in May 1910 (Schumann, 1910). The *commedia dell'arte* ballet featured décor by Léon Bakst, an artist who employed colour symbolically (Garafola 1998, 35). Fokine's work strayed from realism in that it did not employ a narrative. *Carnival*'s scenes, alternatingly witty and poignant—a structure of which Schlemmer carried out in *Triadic Ballet*—featured four performers, including Vaslav Nijinsky as the Harlequin (Schumann 1910). In 1912, Nijinsky's *Afternoon of a Faun* and *Jeux* moved the Ballets Russes squarely into the arena of the avant-garde (Harris 1998). Nijinsky's works shirked ballet's overt romantic realism, with its narratives about star-crossed lovers, and they created, instead, a vision of the dancer in symbolist terms. The French author Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), identified as the father of symbolism, 'initiated a language that integrated the spiritual and the material into single images that appealed to several of the senses in a synaesthetic manner' (Bychkov, 2014). Nijinsky produced such a symbolist image in *Afternoon of a Faun*. Its forest creature stretches on a rock and eats grapes, but as the ballet unfolds, he becomes a

maker.

universal metaphor for desire and erotic life. Writing about Nijinsky's avant-garde works for Diaghilev, Ballets Russes scholar Lynn Garafola underscored that in *Faun* Nijinsky uniquely focussed on the two-dimensional presentation of the body (Garafola, 1998: 60). It could be said that Nijinsky was associating his work to experimentalist painting, to the idea of abstracting the dance element in order to get at its essence—the faun in profile, his body arched in ecstasy. Schlemmer, on the other hand, discussed how he, a visual artist and sculptor, had become inspired by the three-dimensional possibilities of dance:

> I have moved from the geometry of the one-dimensional surface to the half-plastic (relief), and thence to the fully plastic art of the human body.
>
> (Schlemmer, 1972: 82)

In this statement, Schlemmer intimated how dance was a progression out of painting in that it offered a more advanced rendering of geometry. This idea has been associated with neoclassical ballet; that is, if one perceives the term as a danced rhetoric of the geometric planes of the body in conversation with codified ballet technique. William Forsythe's *In the middle, somewhat elevated* (1987) has been discussed in these terms; his neo-classicising, argued the dance writer Roslyn Sulcas, descends from Balanchine (Sulcas 2012). But surely neoclassical ballet, which replaced narrative with an abstract orientation—that included the sharpening of classical ballet's geometric forms—has deeper roots. For example, Bronislava Nijinska described her brother's ballet *Jeux* (1912) as a 'forerunner of Neoclassical Ballet' (Garafola, 1998: 60). It will be argued that *Triadic Ballet* was the first neoclassical ballet. It did not forward a story; its subject was the dancers'

futuristic geometric costumes, built upon the circle, triangle and square, that were instantiated in the patterns the performers made on the dance floor. Significantly, Schlemmer's costumes stood in place of a choreography that could express the physicality of what is understood as ballet neoclassicism. The term, for this writer, involves the technical advancements of the ballet dancer corpus: she is muscularly streamlined, faster, and seemingly inexhaustible. Astoundingly, she becomes moving advanced geometry. Schlemmer paved the way for this type of ballet neoclassicism, which was ultimately expressed in Balanchine's black and white, leotard ballets. It is important to note that Schlemmer's influence on Balanchine possesses a factual and historical component. Before Stravinsky created with Balanchine *Apollon musagète* (1928)—variously identified as the definitive neoclassical ballet (Adler, 1988; Mackrell and Craine, 2010)—Stravinsky was collaborating with Schlemmer (Kahn-Rossi, 1988; Schlemmer, 1972: 145). Before these details are discussed, the development of Schlemmer's thinking about *Triadic Ballet* will be summarised.

In Schlemmer's 1912 diary entry, he called the ballet he was imagining, 'The development of the old dance to the new',[49] and he described this transformation by using Nietzsche's Dionysian-Apollonian binary (Schlemmer, 1972: 7). In his libretto, Schlemmer described two distinctively different scenes: 'a passionate' and

[49] According to ballet dancer Albert Burger, who along with ballet dancer Else Hötzel performed this 1912 work with Schlemmer, the work was titled *The Courtship* (Troy, 1986: 128).

'erotic' dance, and a 'dance measured, noble' (Schlemmer, 1972: 8). In the first scene, Schlemmer stated that the main character is, 'the embodiment of the Dionysian element'; he then described how the 'the mood' intensifies from 'red to orange', and the demon (who seems to represent the Dionysian element) is 'victorious' while 'Music and dance' abound, 'full of passionate excitement—erotic delirium' (Schlemmer, 1972: 7-8). The second scene culminates with the demise of the demon. This occurs, Schlemmer wrote, when a cherub appears, and 'the mood' becomes 'pure white', and the dance becomes 'measured and noble', the music 'majestic, solemn' (Schlemmer, 1972: 7-8). Though he doesn't use the word Apollonian, he intimated that this 'new' dance triumphs over the Dionysian: 'The dancers [are] brought together, led by the cherub. A white star appears in the background. The music softly fades away. The demon dead' (Schlemmer, 1972: 8). In sum, the Dionysian demon is replaced by purity and serenity, as symbolised by the appearance of a 'white star' and 'the cherub', a Christian angel child (Schlemmer, 1972: 8). The Dionysian demon, in contrast, does not have a Christian character. His frenzied dance whips up erotic, red-hot emotion. As was the case with Wigman, who discussed both *Witch Dance II* and the 'Elemental' dance as demonic, in Schlemmer's proto-*Triadic Ballet* libretto, Christianity looms large. Perhaps that is why the emerging choreographer chose to avoid the term Apollonian. It was too pagan.

In Schlemmer's subsequent writings about *Triadic Ballet*, Christian culture disappears. For Nietzsche, Christianity was the source of the West's ills. For

Schlemmer, the Christian tradition may have simply been too narrative, figurative and mimetic. As Schlemmer developed *Triadic Ballet*, he sought to express through the work a metaphysical harmony with the universe. The triad in his *Triadic* Ballet is not the holy trinity. It refers to the triad of three primary colours, three sections of the dance, and three dancers, among other related metaphors of three. Schlemmer believed that an ideal rectangular constellation could be achieved by employing a dance aesthetic focussed on colour, shape and the geometric pathways of the body in space. It should be noted that, since the era of Balanchine, single colour fields in lighting design (that include the cyclorama), as well as choreography that asserts geometric pathways and the body as moving geometric architecture, are elements associated in dance with ballet neoclassicism.

One year after penning his libretto, Schlemmer's writing demonstrated an increased interest in visual abstraction, which he believed would bring about mystic harmony. In 1913, he wrote,

> I feel the objective representation of nature would be the way to capture a more profound form of mysticism… The symbolic force and import of the dot, the line, the triangle, the square, the circle.
>
> (Schlemmer, 1972: 10)

Historically, mysticism has been associated with the occult and the irrational. But for Schlemmer a new concept of mysticism developed, in part and has been discussed, though Kandinsky's discussion of colour and geometric form in *concerning the spiritual in art*, which Kandinsky had published one year before Schlemmer's above-quoted musings. Almost three decades later, the American

formalist art critic Clement Greenberg, who, like Schlemmer, felt that there had been a 'decay of our present society' wrote in his essay 'Towards a Newer Laocoön' about the value of simplification and abstraction:

> Purity in art consists in acceptance […] of the limitations of the medium […] The arts, then, have been hunted back to their mediums, and there they have been isolated, concentrated and defined.
>
> (Greenberg, 1940: 305)

Greenberg, who begrudgingly accepted the term abstract expressionism to denote the group of painters of which he was championing, did not connect artists, such as Mark Rothko and Robert Motherwell, directly with spiritualism. Schlemmer and Kandinsky, in contrast, seemed proud of replacing religion with an abstract-oriented art (Greenberg, 1958: 209, 8-9, 4). This, after all, was Nietzsche's project, as articulated specifically through his discussion of the Apollonian.

In Schlemmer's diary, the year 1915 appears to be a defining moment. At this time, Schlemmer began honing his aesthetic vision. It wasn't merely abstraction that he championed, but a masculine type of abstraction which he contrasted against another type, identified as 'Gothic', 'intoxicated,' 'Dionysian' (Schlemmer, 1972: 31). Once again, Schlemmer did not call this masculine aesthetic Apollonian. Instead he wrote, 'Characteristics of the first type are: discipline, ruggedness, reserve, restraint, exclusivity, profundity…These are probably the essential characteristics of ancient Greek and Roman art' (Schlemmer, 1972: 30-31). This masculine aesthetic, as Schlemmer intimated, was not given over to excesses. It was disciplined. Another example of Schlemmer's championing of a masculine

aesthetic also occurs in another 1915 diary entry. It concerns the Apollo of Tenea statue, created circa 560 B.C.E: 'The way in which he curls his thumb into his fist and extends his arms expresses an attitude toward life. A figure symbolic of a certain body culture' (Schlemmer, 1972: 29). This body culture that the Apollo of Tenea statue represented was not only masculine, found Schlemmer, but also militant. It was the opposite of Isadora Duncan's perception of Greek art, which following her visits to The British Museum, she alleged was expressive of a body culture that was free, unencumbered and sensual. Duncan wrote,

> We spent most of our time in the British Museum, where Raymond [her brother] made sketches of all the Greek vases and bas-reliefs, and I tried to express them to whatever music seemed to me to be in harmony with the rhythms of the feet and the Dionysic set of the head, and the tossing of the thyrsis.
>
> (Duncan, 2013: 42)

Like Duncan's embodiment of the Greek vases and bas-reliefs, it is possible that Schlemmer took inspiration from the Apollo of Tenea statue, and directly recast his perception of its characteristics into The Abstract, the costume that he made for himself and that served as the final vision in *Triadic Ballet*. Whereas the Apollo of Tenea, wrote Schlemmer (1972: 29), 'curls his thumb into his fist and extends his arms', the arm of Schlemmer's Abstract costume is more fearsome: it ends in a fencing sword (and the other arm ends in a bat). Instead of the Apollo of Tenea's warrior-like gesture, The Abstract's arm is a vision of military technological advancement. Indeed, the arm *is* a sword. Schlemmer might have called his final costume Abstract Apollo, but by calling it The Abstract, he removed the idea of the body as a figurative representation of ancient male culture. Indeed, Schlemmer's

Abstract is nothing less than a dream of a futuristic man. And since Nietzsche (1999: 25) stated in *BOT* that the Apollonian is a dream of 'the illusion of illusion', it can be said that Schlemmer's Abstract follows Nietzsche's binary concepts:

> … let us first conceive them as separate art worlds of ***dream*** and *intoxication*, two similar states which contrast similarly to the Apolline and the Dionysiac […] It was in dreams that the great sculptor first saw the delightful bodies of the superhuman beings.[50]
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 14; italics and underlining, author's)

Schlemmer not only partakes of Nietzsche's Apollonian-dream-superhuman, as related to Ancient Greek culture, he also applied Nietzsche's overall dialect in *BOT* to his thinking about renowned artists of the modern era. Specifically, Schlemmer discussed romantic and classical writers and composers as either Dionysian or Apollonian. For example, in a letter to Meyer-Amden, dated 23 September 1918, Schlemmer wrote, 'I can easily see a connection between Hölderlin and Beethoven in terms of the Apollonian-Dionysian contrast' (Schlemmer, 1972: 60). Two months earlier, Schlemmer wrote that that Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) was in his later years, when he had become a popular Romantic writer in Germany, a failed artist:

> I was amazed to see how the young Hölderlin so reverently modelled himself on the classical authors, and how at his peak he lost his sense of proportion and plunged into Dionysian excess.
>
> (Schlemmer, 1972: 58)

[50] In one introduction to *BOT*, the Nietzsche scholar Michael Tanner explained the philosopher's concept of dream as reality: 'The pleasure of epic poetry or sculpture is to be accounted for by invoking our delight in appearances, especially if they partake of the lucidity of dreams. Everything in them has maximum individuality, the hardest edges. It is therefore illusory, since as Nietzsche has said, reality is one and indivisible' (Nietzsche, 1993: xvi).

Schlemmer then wondered whether the author's earlier writings bore similarities to Schiller's and Goethe's, except that Hölderin had taken a wrong turn, becoming 'more dramatic' and less 'subjectivistic' (Schlemmer, 1972: 61). Schlemmer applied the same mode of thinking to Beethoven by considering whether the composer's 'subjectivity', a positive attribute, put him in the same league as Mozart and Hayden (Schlemmer, 1972: 61; Wagner and Allen, 2014: 23). In sum, Schlemmer made clear that the 'dramatic' is negative and Dionysian; by extension, he intimated that subjectivity is positive and related to the Apollonian. What is notable, beyond Schlemmer's connecting of the Dionysian with the excessive and the Apollonian with subjectivity, is Schlemmer's rather obsessive need to order artists, to put them into theoretical categories. Yet Schlemmer's categorising terms shifted, often within the same letter. For example, in 1918 Schlemmer replaced 'dramatic' with another term that he found more fitting: 'The catch-word "Expressionism"', he wrote, 'emphasizes this exclusively Dionysian aspect even more' (Schlemmer, 1972: 61). He wished this group, which he perceived as being popular, would go away: 'The modern's Dionysian; the Apollonian: a flash in the pan. Yes: that would be precisely what I wish the moderns' (Schlemmer, 1972: 61). The translation of this particular passage is initially difficult to understand because of its syntax. Is the Apollonian or the Dionysian 'a flash in the pan'? From the context of Schlemmer's writings, it seems that the modern-Dionysian-expressionists were the ones who were bound for historical oblivion. A year later, in a 7 May 1919 diary entry, Schlemmer wrote, 'The drawbacks of our times: mediocrity, conformism; expressionism' (Schlemmer, 1972: 69). Given

Schlemmer's disdain for the Dionysian, it seems rather impossible to perceive his aesthetic orientation as a balancing of Apollonian and Dionysian aesthetics. Consider this passage of his, written on 30 April 1919:

> One could picture an artist who is ahead of his times; the revolution comes… his art already depicts the post-revolutionary world—cleansed, a new Greece, purity…Should he retrace his steps? Act ecstatic and Dionysian? True, an artist never puts unrest, revolt, death and resurrection behind him—but what matters for the individual is the dominant mode: Apollonian or Dionysian… The hour of the manifesto is past…the German method of bringing order out of chaos can come into play.
>
> (Schlemmer, 1972: 69)

As Schlemmer quixotically argued above, the Dionysian may be the motor for necessary artistic 'revolution', but in the 'post-revolutionary world', the artist should 'retrace his steps' because the 'hour of the manifesto is past'. 'His art' should then become 'cleansed', become a renovation of a 'new Greece', 'purity'. In Schlemmer's rumination of 1919, following the revolutionary end to the Hapsburg monarchy, Schlemmer argued that the 'Apollonian' is 'purity' and it is the 'dominant mode'. Yet it is only possible to understand this rather convoluted passage by scrutinising Schlemmer's last sentence, whereby he intimated why the Dionysian cannot be the dominant mode: It is merely 'the German method of bringing order out of chaos'. In this key phrase, Schlemmer set up a zero-sum binary: He did not write Apollonian and Dionysian, he wrote 'Apollonian *or* Dionysian' (Schlemmer, 1972: 69, italics, mine).

Eight months later, in a 28 December 1919 letter to Meyer-Amden, Schlemmer announced his intentions to collaborate on a ballet project with the 'Burgers!',

both of whom were ballet dancers (Schlemmer, 1972: 77). He also called into question Nietzsche's designation of dance as being all important: 'Let the world belong to the dancer, as Nietzsche would say. But isn't dance pure effect?' (Schlemmer, 1972: 77). In other words, Schlemmer seemed to be asking, isn't dancing more of means to an end? Then, in the spring of 1920, Schlemmer moved to Cannstatt, Germany and began constructing with his brother Carl the figurines that would serve as the models of the geometric costumes for *Triadic Ballet* and that would radicalise the human form (Chung 2004, 72-73). Schlemmer feared that if he did not present his ballet soon, his name would be lost, as his production of visual art was decreasing. He expressed this sentiment in a letter to his wife Tut in September 1920: 'I shall bring my mathematical, constructivist art into contact with life, lest some day I find myself alone on an icy pinnacle' (Schlemmer, 1972: 88). It would be two more years before *Triadic Ballet* came into 'contact with life'—the audience (Schlemmer, 1972: 88). In the meantime, starting in December 1920, Schlemmer accepted a position at the Weimar Bauhaus. He also split his time between Weimar and Stuttgart, where he honed his understanding of performance by making décor and costumes for the Stuttgart Landestheatre.

In a 12 June 1920 letter to Meyer-Amden, Schlemmer explained his reasons for being interested in dance while simultaneously discussing his artistic development:

> Once upon a time, dance was totally alien to me, and I am amazed to see how this inherited aspect of myself, which I denied and cordially hated, as if out of a guilty conscience, has come into its own […] Victory for the aesthetic? I have moved from the geometry of the one-dimensional surface to the half-plastic (relief), and thence to the fully plastic art of the human

> body […] There is also a geometry that applies to the surface of the dance floor, though only as part of a projection of spatial solid geometry.
>
> (Schlemmer, 1972: 82)

In the above, Schlemmer described working from a static one-dimensionality to a moving three dimensionality on 'the dance floor'. He made it clear that choreography, per se, was not what interested him as much as the moving body's ability to become 'spatial solid geometry'. Two weeks earlier Schlemmer had written that the further development of *Triadic Ballet*'s 'ground geometry', in which dancers' geometric pathways are delineated by a grid-like surface, was his next goal (Schlemmer cited in Maur, 2014: 194). Given these details, it seems that Schlemmer was moving toward a choreography of mathematical precision. No mention is made of the dancers' emotional impulse. What he did mention, in the spring of 1920, is that he once 'cordially hated' dance (Schlemmer, 1972:82). Unfortunately, Schlemmer did not elaborate on this subject. In 'The Mathematics of Dance' (1926), however, Schlemmer shed some light on what aspects of dance he found disdainful through a forceful comparison. It was carried out in code in that neither ballet nor German modern dance (*Ausdruckstanz*) is named:

> The precise training, the choreography that has been developed for centuries, the 'freedom within law', all these in their finest achievement are still able to fascinate. The happiest union was still that between the full-blooded dancing genius of the Russians and the French tradition, a union that led to ultimate victories. After that came chaos: high-school teacher methodology next to expressionist ecstasy, next to heroic rubbish.
>
> (Schlemmer, 1978 [1926]: 118)

Ballet, it could be said, possesses the attributes of Apollonian order ('precise') and logic ('freedom within law'). Modern dance, on the other hand, is all Dionysian 'chaos' and 'ecstasy', and thus 'high-school teacher' 'rubbish'. Schlemmer likely

approved of ballet's centuries-old systematic training in which the articulation and isolation of the limbs is carried out through a codified language that can be perceived as mathematical. The actions of the feet, ankles, knees and hip, as well as the waist, shoulders, arms, fingers and head possess divisional aspects. The goal is to create an organised coordination, a unified system. This effect is achieved through rigorous training and discipline that Schlemmer likely found was the opposite of expressionism, and/or Dionysian ecstasy.

Despite Schlemmer's esteem for ballet, he was nonetheless an outsider in the ballet community. He expressed this understanding, and posited an argument to be perceived as part of it, in a programme note that he wrote for *Triadic Ballet*'s Stuttgart premiere at the Landestheater on 20 September 1922. Titled "Ballett? Ballett!", Schlemmer stated that his work

> should show the beginning from which might develop a German ballet, which on a stylistically national foundation, which would have so much intrinsic value that it might complete with perhaps admirable, but nonetheless alien analogies (Russian/Swedish ballet).
>
> (Schlemmer cited in Maur, 2014: 200)

In the above, Schlemmer argued for a specific perception of his ballet—as expressing Germanness. Schlemmer was ostensibly making a connection between *Triadic Ballet* and German identity, as equally being rooted in the Enlightenment's notion of rationality and progress, specifically technical progress. It must be said that Nietzsche described scientific progress in *BOT* as a 'dubious Enlightenment', which he ultimately related to the Apollonian (Nietzsche, 1999: 66-67, 69). As for

Schlemmer's decision to employ the dubious question mark in his 'Ballet? Ballet!' programme note title, he may have been acknowledging that some observers might not find his work to be such. Indeed, in the final scene of his work, as reconstructed by Hastings, The Abstract does not move, let alone pirouette or *assemblé*. *Triadic Ballet,* in this conclusionary moment, is less a ballet and more a message about a utopian, technological future in which The Abstract radiates stillness; he is an awesome vision: a man melded into a machine.

Of additional interest in Schlemmer's programme note is that he alluded to 'alien analogies', such as Russian and Swedish ballet, thus providing a connection for his audience between *Triadic Ballet* and the more avant-garde works of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes and the Ballet Suedois. For example, Diaghilev's 1917 *Parade*—with its constructivist costumes by Pablo Picasso, its sounds of typewriters and sirens by Jean Cocteau, and its vaudeville-like dance scenes by Léonide Massine—is considered the ballet that most successfully trumpeted the industrial-modernist era; it also redefined ballet through a subversion of the tradition's expectations (Garafola, 1989: 99, 387). Schlemmer, however, was no Diaghilev who could create avant-garde works of fascination, or bourgeois exasperation, every season. The German artist did not have a company. And by 1923, when the Burgers, now married, made it clear to Schlemmer that they no longer wanted to perform his work—with its cumbersome, physically-constraining costumes—he cajoled them, with increasing desperation, to participate for three more years (Maur, 2014: 197). Schlemmer needed trained ballet dancers to realise his aesthetic vision; ones that

would be willing to put their bodies in the service of articulating a choreography devoted to his triadic concerns of mathematics, geometry and physics.

Because the choreographic details of *Triadic Ballet* have mostly been lost to history, it is useful to examine Schlemmer's non-dance writing in which he made the body his focus. This was carried out in his text *Man: Teaching Notes from the Bauhaus.* Of significance is that his text is not titled *mensch* (human), but *mann.* Drawn from years 1928 and 1929, it is divided into three parts, 'the *formal,* the *biological* and *philosophical*'. These tripartite values are exemplified, almost exclusively, through illustrations of the male nude figure (Schlemmer, 1971: 25, italics, author's). Perhaps Schlemmer avoided depicting the female form because he identified it with procreation and/or sex. Perhaps he perceived the male body as being more abstract. In the first section of Schlemmer's book, the formal, he discussed the theory of the proportions of the male body, dividing them into rectangles of varying widths and lengths (Schlemmer, 1971: 57). Of course, this abstraction of the body's volume through the employment of rectangles, or circles, is basic to art student training. But in the case of Schlemmer, his interest in teaching the ideal proportions of the body might serve as a clue to his choreographic approach: he wished to show ideal motion—particularly in relation to the vertical standing figure and how its parts are stacked, one upon the other. If one is to take Hastings' reconstruction as the basis for Schlemmer's choreography, her work underscored Schlemmer's interest in the body as a vertical construction that has moving parts. For example, the female dancer in several scenes of the reconstruction performs a *bourée*

forward *en pointe*. She resembles a floating column. Ballet dancers know that the *bourée* is efficiently achieved if one stacks all of the bones and muscles, from the top of the head to the toe, so as to create a plumb line. Schlemmer may have found this systematic organisation of the body fascinating, if not spiritual. In *Triadic Ballet*'s folk dance trio (section two, scene three), the focus of the dancers' movement is on the articulation of their limbs from the knee downwards. They may be doing a basic two step, with the foot flexed and then lengthened, but they are also demonstrating the mechanics of flexion and extension. It is a cubist act, if you will, in that the foot and ankle are sketching angles: 90 and 180 degrees. The American dance critic Edwin Denby, while writing in 1959 about Balanchine's *Agon* (1957), underscored that the choreography's brilliance resided with its composite parts that came together like a 'mosaic', an antecedent to cubism (Denby 1998: 266). *Agon* is now considered a canonical neoclassical ballet. Denby wrote that each of its phrases,

> Fit like the stones in a mosaic, the many-colored stones of a mosaic seen close-up. Each is distinct, you see the cut in between; and you see that the cut between does not interrupt the dance impetus.
>
> (Denby, 1998: 266)

In contrast to *Agon*, Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* probably did not emphasize 'the cut'. He was not a choreographer of Balanchine's stature who could make the moving body look at once both segmented and harmonious. His legacy as a neoclassical ballet choreographer is hardly obvious.

What is quite apparent is Schlemmer's reification of ballet's gender roles. In

Schlemmer's 1924/1926 figurine plan for *Triadic Ballet*, Elsa Hötzel is depicted in pointe shoes for at least five out of the eight scenes in which she appeared (Maur 2014: 196). Though Schlemmer abstracted Hötzel, in that she wore a white mask and the contours of her body were redefined through plastic, wire and fabric, her *Triadic Ballet* costumes also worked to emphasise sexual difference. Indeed, each of Schlemmer's seven female costumes draws attention to a ballerina's tiny waist: it is cinched by either a fan-shaped tutu, bulbous skirt, or cylindrical material around her pelvis. Meanwhile, the men's costumes emphasise the muscular span of a male athlete's shoulders and chest. As *Triadic Ballet* advances, in Hastings' reconstruction, the men appear as space-age warriors. The work, moreover, ends with a vision of one dancer and he is male.

Schlemmer's organisation of his dance scenes in *Triadic Ballet* demonstrated his keen interest in ballet's history. Specifically, he employed three seventeenth-century dance forms, as detailed by dance scholar Susan Au (1998: 15). They are *the ballet du cour* (a group dance organised by the pairing of a man and a woman)*, la danse comique* (that featured acrobatic and comic dance) and *la belle dance* (a vigorous dance that solely featured men). In Hastings' reconstruction in scene two of section two, the male and female dancer enact a neo-*ballet du cour*: they face each other with an arm outstretched; they mirror each other's pathway through space, and then they bow. In scene one of section one, the male dancer enacts a neo-grotesque/comic dance. Dressed as a clown, his shirt is made out of tassels and his pants are striped. When he jumps, his tassels comically move up and down,

transforming him into a large unruly mop. In scene three, section two, two male dancers enact a neo-*belle danse.* They sternly face each other as if they are about to fence; their heads are made of steel armour and their upper bodies are encased into a body-size shield. Clearly, they are warriors. These baroque era dance forms, of which Schlemmer drew upon, historically become enfolded into full-length ballets, which were defined, especially in respect to Petipa's works, as classical. It could be said that by returning to ballet's earlier forms, Schlemmer was modernising the baroque. This too can be considered a neoclassical project, and one that Balanchine carried out in *Agon* (Macaulay, 2011).

Schlemmer also nodded in *Triadic Ballet* to more wide-ranging theatrical traditions, such as the fairground, the opera house and the ritual stage of Ancient Greece. He did so in concert with his absorption of Goethe's *Theory of Colours* (1810). In scene one of *Triadic Ballet*, Schlemmer explained that it is entirely in yellow and signifies 'popular entertainment' (Schlemmer cited in Trimingham, 2012: 86). In turn, Goethe wrote that yellow 'has a serene, gay, softly exciting character' (Goethe, 1840: 307). Schlemmer then explained that scene two is all rose and signifies theatre. Goethe theorised that the red colour spectrum 'conveys an impression of gravity and dignity, and at the same time of grace and attractiveness' (Goethe, 1840: 314). For scene three, Schlemmer stated that it is bathed in black and is called 'The Consecrated Stage' (Schlemmer cited in Trimingham, 2012: 86). Goethe stated that 'Black… the equivalent of darkness, leaves the organ in a state of repose' (Goethe, 1840: 6-7). In contrast, he found bright colours to express 'men in a state

of nature' and 'uncivilised nations' (1840: 304). Given these theories, it could be said that Schlemmer's black-infused stage symbolised for him a calming, civilising force. Because the sole figure in this scene is The Abstract, he could be said to embody those qualities. As for Nietzsche's consecrated stage—as represented by the religious ritual of Ancient Greek tragedy (Nietzsche, 1999: 39)—Schlemmer's consecrated stage's sacredness concerns that which is beyond human. The Abstract's legs, chest and head, respectively, have been transformed into the wings of a plane, a shield and the head of alien. Its construction calls to mind current conversations about the impending impact of artificial intelligence (Hawking, 2014).

Given that Schlemmer, following Goethe, believed that colours are 'immediately associated with the emotions of the mind' (Goethe, 1840: 304), The Abstract's head—composed of one white and one red side, with a piece of metal in between—is of especial significance. The colour choices initially seem to signify the balancing of the Apollonian (white) and the Dionysian (red). Red, explained Schlemmer in his 1912 libretto, expresses passion, white purity (Schlemmer, 1972: 7-8). But these colour uses in respect to the form of The Abstract's head fail to express a Dionysian-Apollonian balancing. That is because the white side of The Abstract's head is larger than the red side, and it, as opposed to the red side, has an eye. The eye is round like the end of a telescope, and it is unblinking, perhaps to signify that this futuristic man-machine is all seeing. Nietzsche's discussion in *BOT* of the demise of the hubristic tragic hero as witnessed by the all-seeing dancing chorus is, consequently, turned

on its head. In Schlemmer's version of transcendental art, the Apollonian hero does not meet a tragic end. He is beyond the slings and arrows of fate. He is a new god, a god of science.[51]

In Schlemmer's compiled diary and letters, he employed the words 'Apollonian' five times and the 'Dionysian' 11 times; yet with each additional mention of Nietzsche's term for the god of wine, Schlemmer grew more negative about its significance to his artistic practice. His disdain seemed to result from the connections he made between the Dionysian and war, the Dionysian and the *Ausdruckdanz* movement, and the Dionysian and romantic literature. While war for Schlemmer represented the horror of the destructive Dionysian, the weaponised soldier did not. Schlemmer's militarized figures, wearing the new industrial materials, combining 'quantities of *papier*-mâché…celluloid, aluminium foil, tinplate, plywood, cardboard, glass, fiberglass rods, wire, leather, and rubber', were industrial idealised figures (Maur, 2014: 194). On 30 September 1922, Schlemmer premiered *Triadic Ballet* and in the same month, he wrote triumphantly in his diary: 'Life has

[51] In 'A Brief History of Ballet: Here/Now Festival 2017', launched as an advertisement for New York City Ballet's spring season, its first and last scenes take place in a rose-coloured landscape that is clearly an homage to Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet.* In NYCB's video, ballet's history begins with a seventeenth-century French aristocrat bowing and it ends with the lightening quick steps of twenty-first century dancers, who move with machine-fire precision. History, it could be said, begins with the court and ends with dancers moving as though they are on a virtuoso battlefield. See: https://www.nycballet.com/Videos/Evergreen-Special/Here-Now-Full-Length-Promo.aspx

become mechanized, thanks to the machine and technology which our senses cannot possibly ignore, that we are intensely aware of man as a machine and the body as a mechanism' (Schlemmer, 1972: 126). But whereas Schlemmer embraced science, Nietzsche thought it was eviscerating life and art. He wrote in *BOT*:

> But now, spurred on by its powerful illusion, *science is rushing irresistible to its limits, where the optimism essential to logic collapses*. For the periphery of the circle of science has an infinite number of points, and while it is as yet impossible to tell how the circle could even be fully measured, *the noble, gifted man*, even before the mid-course of his life, inevitably reaches that peripheral boundary, where he finds himself staring into the ineffable. *If he sees here, to his dismay, how logic twists around itself and finally bites itself in the tail, there dawns a new form of knowledge, tragic knowledge*, which needs art as both protection and remedy, if we are to bear it.
>
> (Nietzsche, 1999: 74, italics, mine)

During the Great War Schlemmer had arguably stared 'into the ineffable', but he did not conclude, as Nietzsche did, that science, when pushed to its limits, produces a 'logic' that 'collapses'. Instead Schlemmer testified through his *Triadic Ballet* how science could take part in a mystical journey, whereby man triumphed through technology, through the hybridisation of his vulnerable body with the weaponry made by scientific creation. As if responding to Schlemmer's interest in encasing the body in armour, Nietzsche posited in *Attempt at Self Criticism* to the following rhetorical question: 'Might the scientific approach be nothing but fear, flight from pessimism. A subtle form of self-defence against—*the truth?* (Nietzsche, 1999: 4).

During the course of his artistic life, Schlemmer presented his aesthetic perspectives through Nietzsche's binary formulation. And unlike Wigman, who

more often wrote retrospectively, Schlemmer wrote in the here and now to work out his thoughts about his creative process and his aesthetic predilections. For example, a young Schlemmer wrote in his diary in 1915, 'I vacillate between two styles, two worlds, two attitudes toward life' (Schlemmer, 1972: 30). In this entry, Schlemmer demonstrates anxiety about whether to embrace the 'Dionysian' or the Apollonian, which he did not name but intimated through the words 'discipline, ruggedness, reserve, restraint' (Schlemmer, 1972: 30-31). Then Schlemmer confessed, 'Given my strong propensity in painting as in life for the rococco, wouldn't the best antidote be to impose the most rigid discipline on myself? But the result would be stylized, sacral art, the other pitfall' (Schlemmer, 1972: 31). Like a voter in an election booth, Schlemmer gives the reader a sense of his anxiety and his perception that he must choose one tradition over another. He wrote with vexation:

> I must break this spell. Must get back in touch with myself. I want to be *me*, even if my artistic ability dies in the attempt. I want to smash the windows of my stifling cell and let in color, world, life, and even more.
>
> (Schlemmer, 1972: 31, italics, author's)

Clearly, this is the writing of a romantic, one might say Dionysian artist. But as Schlemmer's thinking developed, his visual style became more formal. One hopes that he felt he had achieved his quest, which in 1915 he described as 'my inalienable artistic psyche' (Schlemmer, 1972: 31).[52]

[52] It was Freud, not Nietzsche, who coined the word psyche. However, the psychology scholar A. H. Chapman has pointed out that Freud developed his ideas about the psyche from Nietzsche (Chapman, 1995).

Schlemmer's sense that the 'Apollonian', or 'dominant mode', would lead him to artistic self-realisation may have been encouraged by the critical success of *Triadic Ballet* in 1922 (Schlemmer, 1972: 69). A month after the work's premiere, which featured 'one female and two male dancers: twelve dances and eighteen costumes', he wrote to the Swedish archaeologist Hans Hildebrandt about his discovery, explaining how 'The "Triadic Ballet" represents a beginning for me' (Schlemmer, 1972: 196, 129). He also wrote, 'Thus, the dance, which is Dionysian and wholly emotional in origin, becomes strict and Apollonian in its final form, a symbol of the balancing of opposites' (Schlemmer, 1972: 129). Schlemmer's definition of dance hardly sounds like 'a balancing of opposites' or artistic impulses, as was the case for Nietzsche in his theory of art. Schlemmer's assessment of dance is that in 'its final form' it 'becomes strict and Apollonian'.

Schlemmer never lived to see ballet's progress, one that give rise to the neoclassical works of Frederick Ashton, George Balanchine, William Forsythe and even modern dance artists Merce Cunningham and Lucinda Childs. Like many avant-garde German artists, Schlemmer became a victim of the Third Reich which deemed his art decadent. In a 1933 letter to Joseph Goebbels, The Reich's minister of propaganda, Schlemmer tried to resurrect his reputation, explaining that his work was not subversive (Schlemmer, 1972: 311). Regardless, in 1935 The Third Reich barred Schlemmer from teaching at all state art schools (Schlemmer, 1972: 321). Around this time, he sadly concluded that his aesthetic was not in line with the state-sanctioned style: 'I am no Dionysian—I find my ecstasy elsewhere' (Schlemmer,

1972: 345). Despite Schlemmer's enforced alienation, he was prescient in his thinking about ballet's future. More than any other Western dance form, the neoclassical ballet aesthetic of which Schlemmer helped to articulate became one that concerned the mathematics of dance—whereby dancers' limbs dynamically carve the space to create a geometrically precise vision. Schlemmer's passion for precision expressed itself through his writings about ballet and the machine, which he argued would usher in a new Germany:

> When the artists of today appreciate the machine, technology and organisation, when they want precision instead of vagueness, then this is nothing but an escape from chaos and a longing for form.
>
> (Schlemmer, cited in Lahusen, 1986: 67)

Like Schlemmer, Balanchine employed the mechanics of ballet to abstract the body from its historical past. Their mutual interest may not be coincidental. Evidence suggests that Schlemmer influenced the young Balanchine through the German artist's collaboration with Igor Stravinsky, who Balanchine described in 1947 as his aesthetic lodestar (Balanchine, 2007: 142).[53] Stravinsky's relationship with Schlemmer commenced in 1922, when the Russian composer attended a Weimar performance of *Triadic Ballet* (Schlemmer, 1972: 145). Suitably impressed, Stravinsky invited Schlemmer to collaborate with him, from 1922 to 1929, on various productions.[54] In the midst of his association with Schlemmer, Stravinsky

[53] Balanchine stated, '*Apollon* I look back on as the turning point of my life. In its discipline and restraint, in its sustaining oneness of tone and feeling the score was a revelation. It seemed to tell me that I could dare not to use everything, that I, too, could eliminate' (Balanchine, 2007: 142).

[54] The documented collaborations between Schlemmer and Stravinsky comprised the following: In 1927, Stravinsky invited Schlemmer to design the sets for *Les Noces*, whose performance never came to fruition (Kahn-Rossi, 1988). In 1929, Schlemmer

began working in 1928 with the young Balanchine on *Apollon musagète* (Stravinsky, 1988: 143; Taper, 1997: 100). This Stravinsky- Balanchine collaboration forged a close and enduring connection between ballet, abstraction and Apollonian ideals (Jones, 2013: 63; Stanger, 2010: 347; Scholl, 1994: 98). Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* is a crucially important link in the historic development of neoclassical ballet, whereby the body was presented as a symbol of order, and where its value resided with a formal logic—as though art could become science.

made set-designs for Stravinsky's *Renard*, and also his opera *Nightingale*. The latter work was performed at the Stadttheatre in Breslau.

Chapter 5

Debating Ballet and Modern Dance in New York:

Lincoln Kirstein (1907-1997) and John Martin (1893-1985)

The fact is that every writer *creates* his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future.

---Jorge Luis Borges (2000: 236, italics, author's)

5.1 Introduction

In 1927 and 1933, respectively, John Martin and Lincoln Kirstein launched dance careers in New York. By the middle of the century the United States' most populous city would become a dance capital, partly due to their efforts. The tensions between European and American cultures, between elitist and populist tendencies, between masculinist and feminist perspectives on dance—intimated through Nietzsche's ruminations on Apollo and Dionysus—run through Kirstein's and Martin's writings.[55]

As with the comparative analyses of dance writings by Duncan and Volynsky (chapter 3), and then Schlemmer and Wigman (chapter 4), the primary reason for placing the commentaries of Kirstein and Martin side by side is to further develop the argument that key modern dance and ballet figures created a self-understanding of their chosen dance movement by pitching it against the dance movement that was most similar. In doing so the ballet and modern dance figures

[55] The definition of masculinist, as discussed in the introduction, concerns an individual who assumes a belief in male superiority or dominance.

in this study expressed alternative ideas about gender (heteronormative versus anti-heteronormative), the body (ethereality versus gravity), and the ideological role of the theatre (idealisation of life versus exploration of its conflicts). This chapter, as with the organisation of chapter 3, is organised into sub chapter sections to illustrate how Martin's and Kirstein's ideas closely interacted with each other. Following this introduction, 5.1, the chapter's organisation is as follows. In section 5.2, the socio-political milieu in which these dance writers lived is contextualised; then Kirstein's and Martin's backgrounds are comparatively discussed to foreground how they came to dedicate themselves, respectively, to articulating Balanchine's neoclassical and neoromantic ballet aesthetics and Graham's modern dance. Section 5.3 is dedicated to analysing how Nietzsche's Dionysian conceptualisation came to Martin by way of his connections to Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938) and Duncan. In section 5.4, the fierce disputes in print during the 1930s and 1940s between Martin and Kirstein about the merits/demerits of modern dance and ballet are analysed in order to demonstrate how their perceptions were often informed by Nietzsche's binary formulations. Section 5.5 is dedicated to discussing Kirstein's absorption of Nietzsche through his embrace of T.S. Eliot, who possessed an Apollonian orientation toward the arts (Zilcosky, 2005: 23). In section 5.6, Martin's change of heart about Balanchine in the 1940s is considered in comparison to his earlier philosophy about the Dionysian value of modern dance (Martin, 1942b; 1945b; 1946b; 1947). In the final section, titled The Triumph of Apollo (5.7), the institutionalisation of Balanchine and Kirstein's New York City Ballet (NYCB) is briefly discussed to demonstrate its

influence on New York concert dance in the second half of the twentieth century.

5.2 Kirstein's and Martin's Context and Background: Creating Careers in Dance

Although Kirstein and Martin's aesthetic models for dance came primarily from continental Europe, their goals and perspectives were, until 1945, often at odds with each other. Martin is remembered for single-mindedly championing modern dance into the mid 1940s (Kisselgoff et al., 1988). Kirstein championed ballet until his dying day, but also took occasional, brief forays into being open to the modern dance world (Garafola, 2005). Prior to becoming dance apologists, both men hoped to be artists. Kirstein painted, wrote fiction and poetry; Martin played the violin and acted. Perhaps that is why their dance journalism and book writing, as will be demonstrated, was more visionary and personal than factual and even-handed. Each subverted the Socratic conventions of essay writing for the purposes of forwarding their highly idiosyncratic ideas about dance; each shared an intellectual background contextualised by the ubiquity of Nietzsche's influence on the arts, as testified in their writings. As Nietzsche scholar Jennifer Ratner-Rosenhagen underscored, the German philosopher inspired American critics. For Nietzsche,

> The art of criticism was more than the deconstruction of values; it was also a medium for envisioning and creating new images of the possible. In doing so, Nietzsche had dissolved the distinction between the philosopher and the artist. Just as the painter uses color and form to transport the viewer into the imaginative space, Nietzsche invented a language for ideas that, in [Walter] Lippmann's words, could "bathe" the reader "in suggestion".
>
> (Ratner-Rosenhagen, 2011: 155)

Kirstein and Martin developed a dance language and philosophy that were 'bathed in suggestions'—that were rooted in the dance writings of their predecessors. As will be discussed, Kirstein's discussion of neoclassical ballet echoed Schlemmer's and Volynsky's philosophically Nietzschean orientations, especially in respect to his conceptualisation of the Apollonian. Correspondingly, Martin's embrace of the Dionysian resounded with Nietzschean ideas delineated by Isadora Duncan and Mary Wigman. Though neither Kirstein nor Martin directly attributed their orientations to Nietzsche, for reasons that had to do with the German philosopher's politically polarising reception in the United States, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, their writings resonate with Apollonian and Dionysian creative derivations. As is the case with Duncan and Volynsky (chapter 3), as well as Schlemmer and Wigman (chapter 4), Kirstein and Martin contributed to the epistemology of gender theory that, beginning in 1900, related the Dionysian to femaleness and the Apollonian to maleness, but through a binary that was often paradoxical.

The early dance writing careers of these American men coincided with the post-Depression era and the concomitant rise of United States socialist politics. Artists and intellectuals of the Left identified with the New York workers groups' call to arms against conservative politicians and captains of industry (Prickett, 1990: 52). Historically, the moneyed rich looked to Europe for cultural models. This orientation during the Depression years smacked of elitism. Thus, it is not surprising that Martin's strongest statements about how Graham's home-grown aesthetic

embodied a Dionysian ethos occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, when American socialism was at its strongest.[56] These decades were also the most prodigious in Graham's career, as a performer and choreographer. Given the connection between elitism, classicism and ballet, Balanchine's aesthetic initially was deemed suspicious (Martin, 1935); as a consequence, Kirstein sought during the 1930s to disentangle Balanchine's Russo-American ballet work from its aristocratic roots (Kirstein, 1991: 125, 165). Not surprisingly, Kirstein's strongest statements about how Balanchine's aesthetic embodied the Apollonian occurred after World War II, when America was becoming a technological and military super power. In this post-war period Balanchine's choreographic productivity was extremely high, and powerful critics, such as Edwin Denby, Walter Terry—and John Martin—championed several of his neoclassical ballets. These factors influenced foundations and government agencies, which provided continued strong support for Balanchine's NYCB (Fried-Gintis, 2010). In contrast, the modern dance community, and correspondingly Graham, never received a commensurate level of or a continuous funding from these organisations.

The perception of ballet, and specifically NYCB, as a towering symbol of American cultural vitality was hardly a foretold narrative. In the first half of the twentieth century, and despite The Great Depression, New York-grown modern dance and

[56] In respect to dance scholars' elaborations of Graham's influence by Nietzsche, see Elizabeth Kendall (1979: 106) and Kimerer LaMothe (2006: 160-161). Of particular interest in their discussions of Graham's early work, *Dance* (1927), is how it drew inspiration from Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887).

ballet developed rather equally and side by side—even though Martin and Kirstein did not think so. Given this historical context, there was much to see and much for the two writers to comment and disagree upon. Each filled columns, pages and volumes in newspapers, magazines, and books, and their efforts, along with those of many others, gave rise to the New York dance boom of the 1960s (Kisselgoff, 2005). Kirstein's and Martin's dance writings were fuelled by each other's texts. They literally boxed with each other in print, so much so that one can trace their writings through the late 1940s as a literal call and response. Their earlier 1930s diatribes for and against modern dance and ballet took place amidst debates about American capitalism, Russian-Soviet communism and German fascism. These larger cultural debates involved questions about the kind of dance that best served as a moving symbol of nationhood. Germany's Third Reich underwrote modern dance (Karina and Kant, 2003). In contrast, the Soviet apparatchiks chose ballet, in part by championing the creation of Dramballets, with their propagandistic messages about the heroism of the worker (Ezrahi, 2012). Asserting an antagonism to the Soviet control of the arts for propaganda purposes, Martin, in his *America Dancing, the Background and Personalities of the Modern Dance* (1933) claimed that modern dance was the de facto American art form because of its democratic individualism: 'is not a system', he wrote, 'it is a point of view' (Martin, 1968: 20). He also explained that because ballet emerged out of the court, it could not symbolise a democratic culture (Martin, 1968: 53). Kirstein, in contrast, argued in 1948 that ballet, although a foreign art, had been thoroughly Americanised through the forward-thinking choreography of George Balanchine and the 'technical

efficiency' of his dancers (Kirstein, 1950: 18). All of these elements—economic, political, cultural and personal—shaped Kirstein's and Martin's aesthetics. In turn, their writings helped (and damaged) dance artists' ability to garner financial support, to become institutionalised through a home theatre, and to motivate prospective ticket buyers.

Backed by generous financial resources and personal commitment, Kirstein's goal was to create a permanent professional ballet company, helmed by Balanchine that rivalled those of Europe.[57] A scion of the department store Filene's in Boston, Kirstein fell in love with ballet at age 13 (Reynolds, 1988); he founded, when he was a Harvard University undergraduate, the important literary publication *The Hound and Horn* (1927-1934); in 1933, he brought a little-known George Balanchine to the United States. Kirstein wrote ten books, including one novel and a ghost-written biography titled *Nijinsky* (1934b) for the wife of the famous dancer, Romola Nijinsky. He dedicated most of his unpaid professional life to providing Balanchine with a community of support, drawn from New York's cultural and political elite. It nonetheless took Kirstein and Balanchine 15 years to establish a permanent American company. At the height of the Cold War, in 1948, they achieved their goal.

[57] The catalogue of Kirstein's body of writing is at http://www.lincolnkirstein.org/ and it attests to the number of Balanchine-centric articles written by Kirstein. A fair number of them have been collated into book collections, such as *Ballet: Bias & Belief* (1983), *By With To & From: A Lincoln Kirstein Reader* (1991), and *Three Pamphlets Collected* (1967). Another source is *Lincoln Kirstein, the Published Writings, 1922-1977: A First Bibliography* (1978), edited by Simmonds, Silverstein, and Lassalle.

They rechristened their troupe the New York City Ballet.

While Kirstein's upbringing included trips to Europe, where he interacted with important dance figures, an elite education, in which he and his classmates went on to become leaders, and his father's financial backing for his numerous creative projects, Martin's entry into dance was less privileged and glamorous. Perhaps that is why Martin's career has yet to be treated in a biographical study.[58] Given that the details of Martin's life are less known, the following serves as a precis. Martin was born into a middle-class family in Louisville, Kentucky, where his father worked for the Louisville and Nashville Railway. His mother, an amateur singer, inspired him to study violin and piano (Morris, 2006: 65). At the University of Kentucky, Martin majored in classics (Sabin, 1946: 72). There, it is not improbable that he encountered Nietzsche's *BOT*, as the school's president James Kennedy Patterson, a former professor of Greek and Latin, was modernising the university's liberal arts curricula (Smith et al., 2002). After university, Martin moved to Chicago to develop his violin technique at the Chicago Conservatory. Yet he soon changed direction, becoming part of the Chicago Little Theatre, where he acted, wrote and met his future wife, the actress Louise Mick. After World War I, in which he served for one year in the U.S. Army Air Force Signal Corps, Martin moved to New York (Kisselgoff

[58] While there is no biography of Martin, Kirstein's biography by Martin Duberman (2007) is 736 pages.

et al, 1988: 44, 51; Au, 2010; Morris, 2006: 65). In 1927, *The New York Times'*s music critic Olin Downes hired Martin for a contractual period of six months to cover dance events. In short time, he became the paper's first permanent dance columnist in both meanings of the word, as his tenure lasted thirty-five years (1927-1962). Martin's dance columns grew with the prestige of the publication, which following The Great Depression became the paper of record in the United States (Conner, 1994: 179; Berger, 1970).

Starting with his support for Martha Graham's theatrical work in *The New York Times* in 1929, Martin went on to pen 12 books, nine of which featured Graham prominently.[59] From 1934 to 1938, Martin lectured on dance history and taught dance criticism at the Bennington School of the Dance in Vermont, where Graham, with other second-generation modern dancers, such as Hanya Holm, Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman, had annual summer residencies (Cohen, 1988; Kisselgoff et al., 1988: 45). Unlike traditional colleges, Bennington treated dance as part of the core curriculum, providing Martin and Graham with the support to perceive their experiential work as equal to that of scholasticism. As Sali Kriegsman discussed in her *Modern Dance in America: The Bennington Years* (1981), the progressive education of this women's college, founded in 1932, was shaped by the ideas of John Dewey's famous work *Art as Experience* (1934). Bennington's

[59] For the sake of brevity, *The New York Times* will hereafter be referred to as *The Times*.

curricular innovations, which included a concentration in dance, drew in large part upon Dewey's conviction that art was key to understanding the human experience. Dewey's 1934 text, however, was not completely original. It was built on the argument forwarded by Nietzsche in *BOT*. And since Bennington was an all-women's college it, arguably, emphasised the gendered connotations of the Nietzschean/Dionysian art-as-experience idea, a radical alternative to curricula that subordinated dance, and women, to traditional academic scholarship. 'In the early sections of *The Birth of Tragedy*', writes the philosopher Martha Nussbaum,

> Nietzsche [began] portraying desire and the erotic as intelligent, artistic forces; and by portraying art as having a practical function. And with our references to a repudiation of resignation, and to man's joy in man, we now arrive at the fourth and most fundamental break with Schopenhauer: Nietzsche's complete rejection of the normative ethics of pessimism, in favor of a view that urges us to take joy in life, in the body, in becoming even, and especially, in face of the recognition that the world is chaotic and cruel.
>
> (Nussbaum, 1991: 98)

The history of modern dance mirrors the advance of Nietzschean-inspired ideas, not only in its development of progressive educational institutions, but also in its strengthening of the ensemble dancer, who, like the choir in Greek tragedy, symbolised community giving witness to important events.

From 1930 to 1934, Martin gave introductory lectures about modern dance at another leftist institution, The New School for Social Research; in 1931 he presented Graham's troupe, which featured the dancing of her all-female ensemble (Kisselgoff et al., 1988: 45). During the lecture-demonstration, the Russian ballet choreographer Michel Fokine stood up from his seat and said: 'Miss Graham you

must admit this modern dance is ugly' (Soares, 1992: 97; Fokine, 1961: 250-252). This resistance to Graham, and by extension to Martin, by the celebrated Fokine suggested how entrenched traditional ideas of dance were at the time. How Martin or Graham responded to Fokine at this event is not clear, but what became evident was the attitude toward Graham adopted by Fokine's beginner ballet student, Lincoln Kirstein.[60] In a 1932 diary entry, Kirstein wrote of Graham, 'The horror of her dancing is a cross between shitting and belching' (Haslam and Kirstein, 1932, cited in Duberman, 2007: 200). A year later, in 1933, Kirstein's assessment of Graham was no less vicious, but this time Kirstein expressed concern that Graham was influencing others, thanks in part to Martin's supportive reviews.[61] In this instance, Kirstein wrote in his diary that, 'She retched and belched and the audience screamed—and I fear their taste is so corrupted they won't know good dancing when they see it' (Haslam and Kirstein, 1933, cited in Duberman, 2007: 200). Kirstein also articulated his fears about Graham publicly. But at that point, in 1935, he conceded that the female modern dancer possessed artistry. 'Martha Graham', Kirstein wrote in *The Nation*,

> recently gave a sell-out recital of more than usual interest. Though this reviewer is blind to Miss Graham's aesthetic, he admires her personal

[60] According to Nancy Reynolds (1998), Kirstein began studying ballet with Fokine in 1930. Martin Duberman (2007: 212-214) dated Kirstein's first class with Fokine to 1932.

[61] Martin's support for Graham is attested by the sheer number of reviews he wrote in *The Times* about Graham, as opposed to Balanchine, Kirstein's choreographer of choice. In 1933 Martin wrote about Graham five times and Balanchine once; in 1934, the division of attention was 8:3; in 1935, 7:0; in 1936, 3:0; in 1937, 6:3; in 1938, 1:1; in 1939, 3:0. And finally, in 1940, Martin wrote about Graham and Balanchine equally: 4:4. As will be discussed, after 1949, Martin wrote more reviews about Balanchine's New York City Ballet than Graham's company, which generally had one, and sometimes no seasons, in New York.

> integrity, her persistence, her success, and her talent for composition.
>
> (Kirstein, 1935: 258)

Kirstein was not the only dance critic who wished modern dance would wither. According to *Dance Index* contributing writer Robert Sabin (1946), important critics' distaste for modern dance continued into the 1940s. *Dance Index* (1940-1948) was founded by none other than Kirstein. It was ballet centric and was an outgrowth of Kirstein's dance archives that he donated in 1940 to the Museum of Modern Art. *Dance Index* averaged 1,000 subscribers, in part, because it did not solicit advertisements (Chujoy, 1953: 145). *Dance Index*'s competitor was *Dance Observer* (1934-1964), founded by Graham's mentor and musical director Louis Horst. A modern dance-centric magazine, it too had a small circulation (Teck, 2011: 314). From time to time, Kirstein and his *Dance Index* editors sought to include some modern dance perspectives in their publication. For example, they invited Martin to contribute his never-completed book on Duncan. It appeared as *Isadora Duncan and Basic Dance, Project for a Textbook* (Martin, 1942a). It was not a strong exemplar of writing about the significance of modern dance.

Through these magazines, the partiality for, or division between, modern dance or ballet apologists advanced. One of Kirstein's *Ballet Index* occasional contributors was the *New York Herald Tribune* dance critic and poet Edwin Denby. *Ballet Index* editor Robert Sabin sarcastically wrote in 1941 about Denby's disdain for modern dance:

> He regards 'modern' dancers with suspicion and dislike […] Mr. Denby thinks of modern dance in much the same way that a female school teacher thinks

> of handling a snake in biology class, he will never get to understand it.
>
> (Sabin, 1941: 18)

The misogyny in both Sabin's and Kirstein's estimation of modern dance and Graham is evident.[62] When Martin died in 1985, Anna Kisselgoff, who had succeeded him as the senior dance critic at *The Times*, spoke about his legacy:

> During the 1930s, the public was bewildered by or apathetic to the emergence of modern dance, and most of the press was hostile; but throughout the decade Martin ceaselessly championed it […] More than any other writer, he helped establish it as a recognized art form.
>
> (Kisselgoff et al., 1988: 44)

Kirstein, it must also be said, also championed American ballet. Moreover, Kirstein was Balanchine's financial pillar. Martin, in contrast, was Graham's close colleague and critical apologist. These men's differences in support of Balanchine's and Graham's careers would have serious ramifications in the future.

5.5 Martin's Neo-Dionysian Aesthetics: Stanislavsky, Duncan, Nietzsche

Before Martin became a dance columnist for *The Times*, he discovered in the Russian actor and theatre director Konstantin Stanislavsky a theorist who strongly informed his point of view about modern dance (Cohen, 1998; Conner, 1994: 175; Hering, 1952). Martin's introduction to the work of the founder of the Moscow Art Theatre (1898-1917) occurred in Chicago and through his future wife Louise Mick, who had studied his technique (Kisselgoff et al., 1988: 44). Stanislavsky's impact on Martin is profound for two reasons. First, Stanislavsky's writing about drama was

[62] Like Kirstein, Edwin Denby changed his point of view about Graham circa 1949. According to Gertrude Lippincott of *Dance Index,* Denby became an 'ardent admirer of Martha Graham as are many balletomanes' (Lippincott, 1949: 73).

infused with Nietzsche's theory of the Dionysian-Apollonian creative impulses (Stanislavsky, 2017). Second, Stanislavsky trained actors to excavate personal memories and physicalize them—and there is ample evidence, as will be discussed, that he developed this technique by watching Isadora Duncan. Explaining the importance of movement for Stanislavsky, the theatre scholar David Griffiths wrote,

> At the end of his life, Stanislavsky laid down with a definitive sense of finality the premise that all psychological and emotional complexities of the mind, of the transmission of thoughts and feelings are inextricably represented by physical action.
>
> (Griffiths, 1998: 9)

When Martin began writing about modern dance, he applied Stanislavsky's theories, which he studied personally under Richard Boleslavsky, a graduate of Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theatre, who had founded an acting school in New York. From 1924 to 1926, Martin served as its executive director; there, he became 'a convert to Stanislavsky' (Conner, 1994: 162).

Neither Stanislavsky nor Martin mentioned Nietzsche as a formative influence in their published writings.[63] This is not surprising, given that Nietzsche's books were banned in Russian after 1923 (Rosenthal, 1994: 178) and Nietzsche's name was linked for United States readers to insanity, before World War I, and then to fascism in the 1930s, the same era in which Martin began writing about dance. In

[63] Martin only mentioned Nietzsche's name once in print. It was in the context of reviewing one of Graham's early works in which her programme note included the German philosopher's name alongside of an excerpted statement of his.

Nietzsche, the Godfather of Fascism?, Jacob Golomb explained that,

> Sadly, such crude distortions [of Nietzsche] were echoed in Allied war propaganda and in newspaper headlines in Britain and the United States, which (continuing the traditions of the First World War) sometimes depicted the "insane philosopher" as the source of a ruthless German barbarism and as Hitler's favorite author.
>
> (Golomb, 2003: 17)

For these political reasons, the Nietzschean influence on artists in this period was expressed in code words and indirectly. Yet, as explained by Stanislavsky scholar Rose Whyman (2008: 3), Nietzsche's idea that the 'subconscious or unconscious […] could be touched or unmasked through art' continued to inspire intellectuals and artists alike. Stanislavsky alluded to Nietzsche's ideas while discussing his perceptions of Isadora Duncan, who was a proud Nietzschean, as attested in her Dionysian manifesto 'The Dance of the Future' from 1903. In 1905 she toured Russian and, in Moscow, she briefly met Stanislavsky, who attended one of her dance concerts. When Duncan returned to Moscow in 1908, Stanislavsky developed an intimate alliance with her. He invited her to teach at his Moscow Art Theatre, gave over his stage to her performances, of which he saw each one, and attended her rehearsals, where they discussed the intersectionality of their respective art forms (Sirotkina, 2010: 138; Duncan, 2013: 143). Stanislavsky reminisced about this experience, writing,

> At the time I was in search of that very creative motor, which the actor must learn to put in his soul before he comes out on stage… I watched her during performances and rehearsals, when her developing emotion would first change the expression of her face, and with shining eyes she would pass to the display of what was born in her soul. In remembering all our accidental discussions of art, and comparing what she did to what I was doing, it became clear to me that we were looking for one and the same thing in different branches of art.

(Stanislavsky, 2014: 507)

For both Duncan and Stanislavsky, Nietzsche's theory of the creative impulse, originating in the tension between the Apollonian and Dionysian, was central to their investigations.[64] Indeed, Stanislavsky, nearly echoed Nietzsche, when he referred to the creative impulse as 'that very creative motor' (Stanislavsky, 2014: 507). Stanislavsky's idea of a 'creative motor' emphasised the visceral and passionate powers that Nietzsche's philosophy of art required. 'I watched Duncan', Stanislavsky wrote, 'during performances and rehearsals, when her developing emotion would first change the expression of her face' (Stanislavsky, 2014: 507). Indeed, Stanislavsky witnessed how Duncan's emotion first expressed itself in her 'shining eyes' and then, like a 'creative motor', travelled through her limbs. Stanislavsky's famous method for training actors, urging them to access their deepest emotions and memories for performance, underscored his assimilation of Duncan's methods, even as he avoided directly using the Nietzschean language which informed Duncan's dance philosophy.

5.4 Martin and Kirstein: Boxing in print

Because of Martin's work at Boleslavksy's Stanislavsky-oriented school, it is not surprising that he responded to dancers whose physical impulse originated in

[64] Nietzsche wrote in *BOT*, 'Having established these general premises and oppositions, let us take a look at the *Greeks*, in order to assess to what degree and to what extent those *natural artistic impulses* were developed in them: this will lead us to a more profound understanding and appreciation of the Greek artist's relation to his archetypes' (Nietzsche, 2003: 18-19, italics, author's).

emotion. Martin found such a dancer in Martha Graham. Yet Graham did not activate her 'soul', to use Stanislavsky's term, through the changing expression of her face (as Stanislavsky described in respect to Duncan), but through the contraction of her pelvis, which became the basis for her creative impulse and technique. 'The house of the pelvic truth' was in fact the title that dancers unofficially gave to Graham's school (Graham, 1991: 211). The first time Martin wrote in depth about Graham's aesthetic was on 10 March 1929. In *The Times*, he explained, 'She [Graham] boils down her moods and her movements until they are devoid of all extraneous substances and are concentrated to the highest degree' (Martin 1929). Like Stanislavsky's writing about Duncan, Martin did not write that Graham was a Dionysian intuitive given over to ecstasy. Martin described of Graham's projected emotion as action, 'concentrated to the highest degree'. While Martin hailed Graham's 'moods', it was their austere distillation that excited him most. With this perception, Martin arguably reframed the notion of Dionysian dance through Graham. She was an American Cassandra who spoke with Puritanical efficiency and directness. Two years later, in 1931, following Martin's three glowing *Times* reviews of Mary Wigman's New York performances, he turned to writing about Graham's season. It is arguable that Martin's perception of Graham's early choreography was contextualised by his observations of the veteran, acclaimed dancer Mary Wigman, who, he wrote, launched 'a new epoch for dancing' and whose aesthetic, he found, was 'something more solid, if less entrancing, than ecstasy' (Martin, 1931a). A month later, Martin described Graham's *Bacchanale*, as embodying, like Wigman's work, an austere Dionysian

aesthetic. He wrote that Graham's solo 'is a suggestion of the Dionysiac rites rather than an attempt to visualize their complete abandon' (Martin, 1931b).

In contrast to Martin, Kirstein did not embrace the expressive austerity of the 1930s American modern dance movement. Nonetheless, Kirstein wrote about Balanchine in similar terms to how Martin wrote about Graham. For example, in his 1930 article, 'The Diaghilev Period', he first described Balanchine as a choreographer who possessed 'more depth and emotional intensity' than his Russian Imperial ballet master predecessors (Kirstein, 1991: 124). Then, as if correcting himself Kirstein wrote about Balanchine's *Apollon Musagète*, which he saw in 1929, in the context of its superior austerity:

> Balanchine has transcended Petipa, by way of *Prince Igor, Les Matelots,* and *La Boutique Fantastique.* Always in the last analysis the classical dance is the most satisfactory; its cold multiplication of a thousand embroideries—divested of the personal, if more romantic charm of pantomime—never becomes cloying (Kirstein, 1991: 125).

Kirstein's struggle in respect to Balanchine is apparent. He wanted to inscribe the young choreographer's aesthetic as 'a cold multiplication of a thousand embroideries—divested of the personal', but he also saw in his ballets a strong emotional presence. The reason why Balanchine's expressiveness may have complicated Kirstein's thinking was that it bore connection with modern dancers' expressive project. Thus, in the last part of 'The Diaghilev Period', Kirstein strayed from his subject in order to address his conflict with modern dance. He argued that modern dance soloists exhibited an 'aimless emotional vacuity' and an 'appalling facility of loose gesture under the guise of free dancing' (Kirstein, 1991: 125-126).

In the same essay, Kirstein seemed to negate Nietzsche's idea that dance expressed catharsis, yet he nonetheless applied Nietzsche's contention that dance is intrinsically religious, writing that ballet 'is the Catholic absolute dogma of dance' (Kirstein, 1991: 125). Modern dancers, Kirstein then explained, are breakaway Catholics: 'To be sure, there are the Calvinists, the Christian Scientists, and less creeds without the law' (Kirstein, 1991: 126).[65] Kirstein positioned these religious anarchists against his main subject: George Balanchine, who identified himself as part of the Russian Orthodox Church.[66] In *Balanchine and the Lost Muse* (2013), the dance scholar Elizabeth Kendall wrote extensively about the profound influence of Russian Orthodoxy on Balanchine. His paternal grandfather became a deacon, 'one step below a priest' and his 'church-going' mother Maria 'revered' religion (Kendall, 2013: 16, 31). According to Kendall, Balanchine imbibed the theatre of the Orthodox religion:

> Around 1910, when Georgi was six, a Balanchivadze relative, the Archbishop of Tbilisi, underwent the ritual conversion to Orthodox monk in St. Petersburg's Kazan Cathedral (only the highest Georgian church figures were summoned to the capital). He prostrated himself on the great cathedral's stone floor as the cloth of black crepe was thrown over him to mark his worldly death, then rose, a new being. Georgi remembered this earthly-heavenly drama all his life and took it into his private mythology. In his ballets, not a few mock corpses ascend to a new life.
>
> (Kendall, 2013: 31)

Three years after writing 'The Diaghilev Period', in which Kirstein positioned

[65] Because Ruth St. Denis, Graham's teacher, was a Christian Scientist, it is possible that Kirstein was referring directly to her in 'The Diaghilev Period', which was published in his magazine *The Hound and Horn*.

[66] Kirstein, who was raised in an observant Jewish household, converted to Roman Catholicism during his adulthood (Garafola, 2005: 29).

Russian Orthodoxy (ballet) against Calvinists and Christian Scientists (modern dance), Kirstein brought Balanchine to New York, where they founded the School of American Ballet.

While Kirstein deemphasised the idea of dance as emotional catharsis in his 1930 essay, it became central to Martin's dance writings. The first time that Martin applied the concept of catharsis, as theorised by Aristotle in *The Poetics*, to the work of Graham occurred in his 8 February 1931 *Times* review of the choreographer's *Primitive Mysteries.* Martin wrote how the audience's response was nothing short of an 'expression of a mass of people whose emotional tension found spontaneous release' (Martin, 1931b). Martin also echoed Stanislavsky, when he wrote that Graham's movements 'are perhaps more nearly discovered *as the result of emotional experiences* which evolve their own expression through the channels of a responsive body' (Martin, 1931b, italics, mine). Two years later, Martin echoed Nietzsche's argument that dance's central function involves sacred ritual, writing in a 26 November review, 'Martha Graham's dancing is essentially religious in its character' (Martin, 1933). Indeed, Graham's choreography and performance style was nothing short of Dionysian for Martin. Her dancing wrought a spiritual catharsis for the masses.

In the introduction to his first book, *The Modern Dance* (1933), Martin alluded to the sense of psychic insecurity produced by The Great Depression: 'today we are reaching farther and farther ahead into uncharted regions of thought' (Martin,

1965: 6). Then he explained that these unknown regions, 'though not alarming to us as nature was to the savage, are just as far from reducible to rational terms' (Martin, 1965: 6). Martin seemed to be suggesting that the impact of modern dance was comparable to the radical effects of the financial crisis, and that both expressed an irrational turn in culture. Just as Martin connected art to politics, he often used the terms 'modern dance' and 'art' interchangeably. Both would move culture beyond empirical analysis: 'The function of art', Martin wrote, 'is to render appreciable that which is… inexpressible through the media of reason and intellect' (Martin, 1965: 63). It is arguable that Martin characterised modern dance as a Dionysian New Deal, ready to balance the economic imbalances of American society.[76] The strategy was seductive because it allowed him to position modern dance as an art form that was giving voice to the underbelly of tension produced by social inequality. Martin then criticised a certain personality, whom he called 'The intellectualist', and who, 'distrusting his aesthetic experience because it is illogical… seizes upon only what is factual or mathematical in the works of art' (Martin, 1965: 67). In this passage, and others, Martin drew a strong connection between cold calculation and the cultural elite, presenting both as being incapable of responding to the Dionysian—as expressed through modern dance, or a society on its knees.[67]

[67] One of the first acts of The New Deal, instituted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration, involved the dispersal in 1933 of $500 million in aid to the poor (McCartin, 2001). In respect to The New Deal on Graham's aesthetic, Mark Franko stated that the final scene of Graham's *American Document* (1938) 'takes the Great Depression as its theme' (Franko, 2012: 38). Like Graham, Martin was forging an alliance between the politics of the Left and modern dance.

Martin then made an even stronger statement in *The Modern Dance* (1933), echoing Nietzsche's description of how the Dionysian reveals reality: 'the arts provide not the scornfully enunciated escape from reality, but rather the escape into reality' (Martin, 1965: 80). In *BOT* Nietzsche theorised, 'Men of philosophy even have a sense that beneath the reality in which we live there is hidden a second, quite different world, and our world is therefore an illusion' (Nietzsche, 2003: 14-15). Modern dance, intimated Martin, would pierce that illusion. Through its visions, it would be an 'escape into reality', revealing a more complex, but truer world. In the latter part of his first book, Martin forwarded another modern dance theory, which he called 'metakinesis' (Martin, 1965: 76). A Greek word, it translates as self-movement. However, Martin defined *metakinesis* as the process by which a dancer transfers emotionally-driven ideas through her physical manifestations to the audience members' very bodies. For Martin, the audience does not just feel the dancers' movements, it feels the movements' implicit meanings. Thus *metakinesis*, he explained, is a 'new, unintellectualized truth' (Martin 1965: 76). Martin's *metakinesis* definition echoes Nietzsche's description of the Apolline Greek's experience of the Dithyramb chorus: 'The dithyrambic votary of Dionysus is thus understood only by his fellows! With what astonishment the Apolline Greek must, have looked upon him!' (Nietzsche, 1999: 21). In this passage, Nietzsche made clear that not everyone could reach 'total liberation'; it was 'understood only by his fellows!' who perceived the symbolic, or in Martin's words, 'the unintellectualized

truth' of non-verbal expression (Nietzsche, 1999: 20-21; Martin, 1965: 76). Martin exhorted his readers to take dance seriously and to attend to its powers through *metakinesis*. His goal was to make audiences understand modern dance as Nietzsche had claimed certain Ancient Greeks understood tragedy: as physically and emotionally transformative.

Though Martin's subject in his first book was modern dance, that did not mean that he refrained from mentioning ballet. In its first pages, he wrote, 'The modern dance … has set itself positively against the artifice of the classic ballet' (Martin, 1965: 6). Kirstein would respond to this calculated insult, but not in his first dance book, *Fokine* (1934). Problematically, its subject was the Imperial Russian-trained ballet choreographer Michel Fokine who believed that emotional expression was the key to ballet's renovation. Fokine's aesthetic project was too similar to modern dancers and, as documented, he drew influence from Duncan (Souritz, 1999: 109-115). Perhaps as a consequence of this similarity, Kirstein stopped discussing Fokine's aesthetic in subsequent articles, despite the fact that it would be a natural strategy for anyone wishing to promote a book. Instead Kirstein directed his attentions to Vaslav Nijinsky, Fokine's avant-garde successor. He briefly became Serge Diaghilev's chief choreographer at The Ballets Russes after Fokine's 1914 departure from the company.

Of the five published essays on dance written the same year in which Kirstein's

Fokine monograph was published, three revolved around Nijinsky.[68] In the first, titled 'Nijinsky', Kirstein argued that it was not modern dancers who revolutionised dance but the Russian ballet star (Kirstein, 1934d: 420). In another essay, 'Revolutionary Ballet Forms', Kirstein connected Nijinsky's revolutionary role—of 'revers[ing] classic dancing' and launching modernism—to Balanchine's plans to revolutionise ballet by producing an American company featuring black and white dancers (Kirstein, 1934g: 12-14). For Kirstein, Nijinsky's revolutionary style harkened back to The Great Dionysia. 'Toward ritual', Kirstein wrote, Nijinsky 'proposed a mass dance drama, more important in scope and intention than any spectacle since the Greek ritual tragedy of the Bacchae' (Kirstein, 1934g: 13). Kirstein echoed Nietzsche's theorisation in 'The Greek Music and Drama' (1870) of the birth of tragedy. 'In the beginnings of the drama', Nietzsche wrote,

> did wildly-moving crowds, dressed as satyrs and sileni… so suddenly announced effect of spring here intensifies the powers of life into such ecstatic conditions, visions, and the belief in one's own enchanted state appear everywhere… here is the cradle of drama.
>
> (Nietzsche, 2013: 16)

Oddly, Kirstein does not name Nijinsky's 'mass dance drama' (Kirstein, 1934g: 13). Certainly, he was referring to Nijinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913), a revolutionary work that was made by a ballet (not a modern) dancer, as Kirstein underscored. In the work, Nijinsky expressed the same beyond-rationality ethos that Nietzsche associated with the Dionysian impulse: he exhorted his dancers not to be facially

[68] Kirstein's keen interest in Nijinsky was likely inspired by the fact that he was ghost writing a biography of the dancer as overseen by its purported author, the widow Romola (*née* de Pulszky) Nijinsky.

expressive in the wake of human sacrifice. Indeed, Nijinsky's approach was opposite to Fokine's, in which he demanded the dancers to project intense emotional expression, as demonstrated in the studio photographs of Nijinsky as the puppet in *Petrushka* (see Kirstein, 1975: 106-111).

It is worth mentioning, in light of Nietzsche's quoted writing, that Nijinsky's interpretation of the title role in his earlier ballet *Afternoon of a Faun* (1912) signalled a Dionysian sexual return—much more so than *Rite of Spring.* In the former, Nijinsky transformed into an animal cum human dancing figure. And during the ballet's final moments, Nijinsky's faun mimes ejaculation. His character behaves like 'satyrs and sileni' of which Nietzsche (2013: 16) discussed. They possessed goat-like features and the sileni were depicted in Greek art with a permanent erection. For Nietzsche and Nijinsky, these anthropomorphic figures expressed unbound sexuality. Kirstein did not dwell on these sexual issues nor did he discuss in his essay the reasons why Nijinsky dispensed with ballet technique and steps. Kirstein's project was to demonstrate that ballet, before the central European modern dance of the 1920s, was the pioneering avant-garde.

Kirstein's embrace of the Dionysian for ballet—at the beginning of his dance career—can also be read through the lens of politics. For example, when Kirstein founded his pick-up troupe Ballet Caravan in 1936, wrote Garafola,

> he also aligned it with the broad left-wing movement that grew up around the Communist party in the 1930s. Kirstein conceived Ballet Caravan as a progressive experiment, a "cooperative unit" that would be run "democratically" rather than hierarchically.

(Garafola, 2005: 24)

In the 1930s Kirstein also reframed his ballet language, dispensing with a previously employed aristocratic metaphor of ballet as possessing a 'nobility of unerring linear architecture' (Kirstein 1991: 125). At this time, Martin was connecting modern dance to populism and socialist politics. Kirstein, as a counteroffensive, appointed Nijinsky, and then Balanchine, as renovators of ballet's courtly lineage. In 'Revolutionary Ballet Forms' (1934), Kirstein described Balanchine's Soviet-era mini-troupe, The Young Ballet of 1922, as making works akin to the humanistic, collaborative ethos of Greek tragedy. The troupe's 'first step', wrote Kirstein of the Young Ballet, was 'to reintegrate dancing with the old, invaluable elements of poetry and music, the human voice and the melodic musical line' (Kirstein, 1934g: 13). Since Kirstein never saw Balanchine's work in the Soviet Union, it remains unclear whether this description is accurate, and whether it bears any resemblance to how Balanchine, who spoke little English at the time, would have characterised his work for his short-lived company.

A year later, Kirstein published his second dance book, *Dance: A Short History of Classic Theatrical Dancing* (1935), which surpassed in scope and size Martin's ambitious text *The Modern Dance* (1933). Yet it too illustrated Nietzsche's tremendous impact on the author's thinking. Reviewing the book on 12 February in *The Nation,* Francis Fergusson summarised the text's *raison d'être*:

> the upshot of all is, of course, a strong defence of ballet, both as the theatrical dance of Western civilization and as a form capable of infinite growth and development.

(Fergusson, 1936: 200, italics, author's)[69]

His text also denigrated Dionysian aesthetics, and did so, ostensibly, to position modern dance as inferior to ballet. For example, he alluded to but did not name Duncan in a passage, where he described the 'technique of orgiastic dance' as one in which, 'the head was tossed back in an extremity of tension, a position impossible to maintain for long except in an advanced state of nervous tautness or pathological spasm' (Kirstein, 1969: 35). This description is potent given that Duncan, who died in 1927, is memorialised through several famous photographs where her head is ecstatically tossed backwards. In the midst of this paragraph, arguably about Duncan, Kirstein also described the cult of 'Baccos' who worshipped in the 'Asia Minor', the area now identified as Turkey and Armenia:

> His [Baccos'] votaries obeyed him in mad explosions of extreme exuberance, an ecstatic eclipse of individuality, in which by passionate, self-indulgent relief they would lose their simple identity and merge in a group consciousness with the God's [sic] pervading influences.
>
> (Kirstein, 1969: 34)

Kirstein described the followers of Baccos as 'self-indulgent', and this description, written in 1935, reappeared in his 1941 Museum of Modern Art exhibition article dedicated to the 'undisciplined' Duncan:

> She knew nothing of dance in one sense, yet through her soft undisciplined body, by virtue of her sturdy instinct, she made her watchers feel that she

[69] The Wigman scholar Susan Manning pointed out that Kirstein's *Dance: A Short History of Classical Theatrical Dancing* (1935) focussed on 'outlining the Great Tradition of ballet and dismissing the counter tradition of modern dance' (Manning, 2006: 263). Martin's *America Dancing; the Background and Personalities of the Modern Dance* (1936) carried out, as the title suggests, the opposite. According to Manning, Martin's work 'attempted to reverse Kirstein's polemic by opposing the Great Men of ballet, or 'spectacular dance,' with the Great Women of modern dance, or 'expressional dance' (Manning, 2006: 263).

was a well of wisdom.

(Kirstein, 1941: 11)

In Kirstein's 'classical' dance history book, the cult of Baccos is not only covertly associated with Duncan, its 'mad explosions' were also overtly compared to non-European dancing: 'For the American Indians as a whole, and including those of Mexico, were passionately Dionysian. They valued the violent experience' (Kirstein, 1969: 34). Kirstein did not come outright and state that American Indians and Mexicans were violent and racially inferior, and that modern dancers bear resemblance to these people, he circled around these ideas. Nonetheless, his language suggests how racial and political tensions were implicated in his dance commentary.

What is evident in reading *Dance: A Short History of Western Theatrical Dancing* is that, for Kirstein, Mary Wigman is a Nietzschean and that is dangerous. Her gestures, he wrote,

> combined influences of Nietzsche and semi-oriental philosophy, the cult of madness, and post-war German starvation… This combined with literal, archaicistic [sic] pornography, stemming from the unachieved left-overs of Nietzsche's and Wagner's vaguer, more cosmic notions.[70]
>
> (Kirstein, 1969: 306)

Kirstein concluded that Wigman's Dionysian aesthetics had 'little to offer' to those 'people who are primarily interested in the theatrical dance' (Kirstein, 1969: 307). Because Wigman's Asiatic-featured mask in *Witch Dance II* underscored her character's non-Western identity, it brings to mind Kirstein's extemporising on

[70] Kirstein returned to excoriating Wigman in 'Crisis in the Dance' (1937), writing that her thinking was a 'combination of Nietzsche and Wagner' and that this 'particular salad… has provided so much powerful and bad art' (Kirstein, 1937: 89).

modern dance's non-Western origins, which were lodged into his discussion of ballet's origins:

> The oriental influences from the Asian Minor, violent, effeminized, often orgiastic, were at odds with the virile Apollonian measures of the lower Archipelago itself.
>
> (Kirstein, 1969: 31)

In this sentence, Kirstein laid out his claim that Western theatrical dance (aka ballet) stemmed from the Greek archipelago, whereas the Dionysian descended from the 'Asian minor' and its 'violent, effeminized' character is 'at odds' with the Apollonian.[71] At the same time, Kirstein's asserted that the Apollonian is 'virile' and measured. Following Volynsky and Schlemmer, Kirstein connected Apollonian masculinity with ballet, describing it as pure rather than sensual and effeminate. Significantly, Kirstein found this 'purity' in Balanchine's clean lines and sharp delineations:

> Yet there is something about a Balanchine ballet… pungent as a clean vegetable scent, calendula or lemon-verbena: sharp as certain metallic bird-notes; tragic as the haunting end of some German lied or Russian peasant song.
>
> (Kirstein, 1969: 307)

In contrast to Kirstein's description of Balanchine's clean, rather a-sexual aesthetic, he intimated that the bisexual modern dancer Ted Shawn was an espouser of free love by quoting the impact that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* had on the modern dancer's thinking. According to Kirstein, Shawn purportedly stated, 'My whole being leaped

[71] Kirstein mistakenly represents the 'Asia Minor' as separate from Ancient Greek culture. If anything, this area was the cradle of Ancient Greek civilization, as attested in the writings of Homer and in Euripides' tragedy *The Trojan Women.*

to an ecstatic agreement with this credo of Nietzsche' (Shawn, 1929: 3, cited in Kirstein, 1969: 352).[72] Nietzsche's 'credo', Kirstein found, was a freedom from all institutional bonds. Nietzsche was for Kirstein the patron saint of an egomaniacal modern dance lineage. Yet consciously or not, Kirstein's writing made him a Nietzschean too: he employed the German philosopher's Dionysian-Apollonian dialectic to describe ballet as being 'at odds' with the aesthetics of modern dance (Kirstein, 1969: 31). As Nietzsche himself wrote about *BOT*, his early work was not a strictly defined philosophical work, and its paradoxes (which Kirstein's work expresses) served in some way as a Rorschach test for various debates about the re-evaluation of values that were saturating the 1930s New York dance world.

Like Kirstein, Martin's employment of Nietzsche's formulations in respect to dance were just as slippery. For example, while wrestling with how to incorporate more current terms, such as surrealism and neoclassicism, Martin in 1936 made it clear that dance neo-classicism troubled him. Writing in a 21 December 1936 *Times* review of Graham's *Chronicle,* he explained that the work in its premiere performance did not culminate in 'a release of emotion' because it was too intellectual in that it possessed a 'neoclassic formality' (Martin 1936a). On his next viewing of *Chronicle*, in early January, Martin experienced a change of heart, writing

[72] Nietzsche argued for an expansive, unfettered idea of love in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, which was understood as approving of sexual experimentation and even promiscuity. Nietzsche, for example, wrote in his text's prologue 'I love him who has a free spirit and a free heart: thus his head is only the entrails of his heart, but his heart drives him to go under' (Nietzsche, 2006b).

that it 'has taken on the tinge of tragedy' (Martin, 1937). Then he damned neoclassical aesthetics: 'Neo-classicism is a cult of the tired and timid, for whom the issues of a turbulent world are too demanding to be met squarely met' (Martin, 1937). In other words, neoclassicism equalled escapist art, a wish to smooth away chaos, and thus reality. It, for Martin, was related to ballet.

Martin would later elide his derision of dance neoclassicism, especially in respect to Balanchine. Yet what is important is how neoclassicism, whose forerunner was arguably Nietzsche's Apollonian formulation, inspired not just Kirstein, but also Martin. For example, in 1943 Martin described Balanchine's first neoclassical ballet *Apollon Musagète* as 'dry, mannered and bloodless', a 'craftsman's job' (Martin, 1943a). It was, in short, too restrained, too orderly. Yet Martin did not feel the same away about Balanchine's *Baiser de la Fée*, which he described as a 'choreographic ingenuity of a high order' (Martin, 1941). What Martin liked about *Baiser*, as he explained in 1946, was that it 'is an altogether modern work, which echoes the past and comments tenderly upon it without sacrificing anything of its identification with its own times' (Martin, 1946a). The past that Martin referred to was 'the nineteenth century fairy tale ballet' (Martin, 1946a). Martin wrote similarly about Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial*, explaining that it is 'a kind of nostalgic tribute to the great days of the Russian Imperial ballet' and that 'it touches gently without ever actually attempting to recreate both the formalism and the sentiment of those times' (Martin, 1942b). In sum, Martin could be generous about neoclassical ballet in the early 1940s, as long as it did not interface, as in the case of *Apollon Musagète,*

with Ancient Greece.

Ancient Greece loomed large in Martin's most Nietzschean book, *America Dancing: The Background and Personalities of the Modern Dance* (1938). In its final chapter, Martin borrowed wholesale from Nietzsche's idea that Wagner's opera was a rebirth of Ancient Greek tragedies. As Wagnerian opera stimulated Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian formulation in *BOT*, Graham's dance works provided a similar impulse for Martin's theorisation of modern dance. For example, Martin wrote in respect to Graham's *Bacchanale* (1931) that,

> There seems to have been a very definite recognition in the dancer's mind at this time of the essential likeness in all the primitive rituals out of which dance grew among whatever people… *once she was steeped in the universality of those elemental practices of seeking rebirth through ecstasy, to the roots of the Greek dance of that remote antiquity when it was still a religious mystery rather than an art*. "Bacchanale," a group dance of tremendous energy, had perhaps in measure broken the ground.
>
> (Martin 1968: 197, italics, mine)

In the final chapter of *America Dancing*, Martin suggested that modern dance was, in effect, nothing short of a phenomenon which animated a Dionysian return. He asked, 'What if a new cycle could be said to have started with Isadora Duncan?' (Martin, 1968: 304). This new cycle, he explained, had its roots (as theorised by Nietzsche) in the Dithyramb chorus: in 'the hint to be found in the ancient cycle which culminated in the first great world theatre in Greece' (Martin, 1968: 304). Martin also found that contemporary ensemble works evoked the Dithyramb chorus, when he described modern dance choreography as, 'group participation

which demanded form of sorts in order to achieve unity' (Martin, 1968: 303).[73] Martin witnessed this 'unity' in Doris Humphrey's *The Shakers* (1931), Graham's *Chronicle* (1936), and Hanya Holm's *Trend* (1937). These dances, all created by women, signified for him an intrinsic connection between the role of the tragic dancing chorus and the development of modern dance choreography.

In Martin's conclusion to *America Dancing*, Martin reiterated the myth of Dionysus, whereby the rebel god is slain and reborn. Dionysus, Martin then posited, stood for American dancing, whose pinnacle of expression came, as the contents of his book made clear, from modern dancers:

> Indeed standing thus at the threshold of a new epoch, it is possible to understand as never before the emotion of that ritual of renewal which is based on the ceremonial life of the ancients and most of their arts. In their cycle of fertility, the death of the old year, *the old god, was not the end but the beginning, and the act was not complete until the slain god had been reborn.* Such a moment of transfiguration with all its suspense and all its excitement is now ours as we touch the nadir of our infinitely larger cycle of renewal and start on the upward curve.
>
> (Martin, 1968: 305-6, italics, mine)

Indeed, the old god, which represented ancient dance, transformed into the new god, modern dance. While the old god produced Greek tragedy, according to Nietzsche, the new god, according to Martin, produced the 'ritual of renewal' associated with Graham's modernity.

[73] Martin reiterated Nietzsche's theorisation in *The Greek Music Drama* regarding how tragedy came into being, when the dance critic wrote, in 1942, the following about Duncan: 'The artist first gives expression to his personal emotion… Next he materializes a protagonist, a concentrated figure who dances with the chorus; and finally an agonist emerges as well—and the theatre is born' (Martin, 1942a).

In Martin's next book, *Introduction to the Dance* (1939), he developed a theory of ballet's history. Martin believed that it did not develop out of religious ritual, like modern dance, but from 'secular interests exclusively' (Martin, 1965: 174). These secular dances that gave rise to ballet also originated in Ancient Greece, but on the side lines of its consecrated stage. Martin wrote,

> when the great games, of sacred origin, are going on, the streets are lined with side shows… but the rich and respected art of the choric dance in both tragedy and comedy takes place only in the celebrations honoring Dionysos. (Martin, 1965: 174)

Martin then posited that dance as ritual evaporated in the Middle Ages. It became concerned with 'pageantry and parading' and 'sumptuous spectacle,' and it was 'stripped of whatever religious quality they have had' (Martin, 1968: 175). In the Renaissance, Martin summarised, 'Dionysos had now no more ritual significance' (Martin, 1968: 174-175). Christianity's repression of paganism had triumphed.

In contrast to Martin's positioning of the Renaissance as a final wrong turn for dance, Kirstein insisted that the era was a gateway: it gave rise to the creation of specialised proscenium spaces; they framed and sharpened ballet's nuances, often diminished in outdoor pageants (Kirstein, 1987: 136).[74] Knowing this, Martin focussed on the purported superficial substance of Renaissance ballet spectacles,

[74] Kirstein wrote that in the Renaissance the 'developing of buildings for housing actors and dancers… exerted a great influence on the arrangement of dances' (Kirstein, 1987: 135).

positing that *Ballet Comique de la Reine* (1581) may have been set in Pan's grove, but the tenor of the work had nothing to do with ancient ritual. It was merely a set piece for secular entertainment, which combined dance, music, poetry and song, and thus preserved trace elements of Ancient Greek performance (Martin, 1965: 178). In contrast to Martin, Kirstein considered *Ballet Comique de la Reine* to be the 'first modern ballet' (Kirstein 1969: 382). Martin countered this argument, writing 'They were convinced, indeed, that the choric drama of the Greeks had been restored' (Martin 1965: 178). For Martin, the 'They' in question seems very much to be Kirstein, who wrote about the *Ballet Comique de la Reine*'s connection to Ancient Greek performance in his dance history textbook (Kirstein, 1969: 161, 172, 334). Nearly two decades later and in one of his last writings, Kirstein insisted again that 'The classic ballet is a highly articulated craft. Its furthest direct ancestor is Greek choral drama' (Kirstein, 1991: 165). Ancient Greek dance as giving rise to ballet or modern dance was a subject about which Kirstein and Martin would never agree. Grappling about dance's origins, they circled around subjects that Nietzsche discussed in chapter seven of *BOT*. For Martin, as Nietzsche wrote, 'The satyr, the Dionysiac chorist, lives in a world granted existence under the religious sanction of myth and ritual' (Nietzsche, 2003: 38) In contrast, Kirstein would eventually emphasise the healing Apollonian art that saves us from the ecstasy of the Dionysian state which, as Nietzsche wrote, exposes man to 'the horror and absurdity of existence' (Nietzsche, 2003: 40).

The subtext in their discussions appeared to be imbricated in Nietzsche's binaries,

the interpenetrations between Apollonian rationality, individuality and light, and Dionysian darkness, ecstasy and fusion. But this set of oppositions was also subsumed in an increasingly larger political discourse, so that, for Martin, the ballet was European and corrupt while American dancing held its autonomy. Martin's evisceration of ballet's spiritual and universal aspects in *Introduction to the Dance* (1939) was not unique to this book. Martin called ballet 'colonial-grade European art' in *America Dancing* (Martin, 1968: 37). 'The colonists', he also wrote, 'came from the common people, who had no contact at all with the sumptuous revelings of the court'; ballet was a 'slave art' in the United States (Martin, 1968: 53). Ballet, in other words, was the colonising symbol in the New World's culture, similar to how French, Spanish and English rulers had absorbed its geographic territory. In contrast to ballet, Martin explained, true American dancing did not grow out of economic foreign power but from a potpourri of cultures:

> American dancing consists of jazz and Indian war dances; the dance of Isadora Duncan was Greek; of Ruth St. Denis, Oriental; of Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey, Central-European or sometimes frankly German. And that takes care nicely of that situation.
>
> (Martin, 1968: 37)

Martin was writing in an atmosphere of conflicts between European and American self-identities, informed by discourses stretching throughout the years when Nietzsche, along with Freud and Marx, made their ideological impacts. In contrast to his approbation of modern dance as expressive of American values, Martin described Balanchine's ballet works in his *Times* reviews as elite and superficial. On 10 March 1935, Martin wrote that Balanchine's *Dreams* (1933)*, L'Errante* (1933), *Serenade* (1935) and *Transcendence* (1935) are 'examples of what someone has

aptly called “Riviera esthetics” [sic]’, a reference to France’s Côte d'Azur, one of the first modern resort destinations (Martin, 1935). Martin nevertheless praised Balanchine’s commercial, less elitist-oriented choreography, nominating Balanchine in a 17 July 1938 review as ‘the first choreographer of Broadway’ for his dance numbers in *I Married an Angel* (Martin, 1938). He was also overjoyed by Balanchine’s satiric dance numbers for the Disney film *Fantasia* (1940), as an example of American, non-elitist populist art. In a 24 November 1940 review, Martin wrote that ‘the mushroom version of the Chinese dance from “The Nutcracker”… is infinitely superior to the original choreographic version’ (Martin, 1940).[75] Indeed, Martin applauded Balanchine—when he was choreographing on the side lines, outside the sacrosanct precincts of the concert stage.

Kirstein vociferously responded to Martin’s positioning of modern dance, and not ballet, as more deserving of the concert stage by pursuing three salient points. First, Kirstein criticised unnamed choreographers’ use of music that was ‘percussive, atonal, amelodic’, explaining that it was one reason why ‘the modern dance is bankrupt of theatrical interest’ (Kirstein, 1936: 6). Second, he argued that contemporary theatre-going should not be associated with the religious experience of being in ancient amphitheatres. Today’s audiences, argued Kirstein, want familiarity not mystery, entertainment not transformation. Moreover, ticket buyers

[75] For further discussion on *Fantasia*, see Helena Hammond’s essay, ‘“So you see, the story was not quite as you were told’: *Maleficent*, Dance, Disney, and Cynicism as the Choreo-philosophical Critique of Neoliberal Precarity’ (2017).

do not experience *metakinesis*. Kirstein wrote,

> The scale of the average experience shaped by the audience is limited… The formation of a new chord of spectacular experience, through experiment or innovation, violates this formula by presenting something the audience does not expect to see, and hence may tend to refuse to accept… In this situation, *there is little possibility of direct corroboration from individual or mass with the stage*.
>
> (Kirstein, 1939: 282, italics, mine)

Third, Kirstein argued that Americans need accessible ballets, and that his pick-up troupe Ballet Caravan (1936-1941) was creating them. To exemplify ballet's accessibility, Kirstein (1938: 116) wrote in *Dance Observer* about Eugene Loring's Western-themed ballet *Billy the Kid* that was created in 1938 for Ballet Caravan and that was set to the heartland-inspired music of Aaron Copland. A year earlier, and for the same periodical, Kirstein wrote in 'The Ballet: Tyranny and Blackmail' how Ballet Caravan shirked the 'swollen' expressionism of Fokine and Massine's ballets (Kirstein, 1937a: 113). Though Kirstein found the Russian choreographers' body of work to be bloated, he nonetheless supported these ballet choreographers' technical education because—at its core—it is 'science'; it stems from a 'four-hundred year' empirical process (Kirstein, 1937e: 129). Beneath the bloat of ballet expressionism was something enduring, concrete, and logical. Kirstein's theory of ballet's scientific superiority, as quoted in full below, became the kernel of his future arguments. Once amplified, they served as an intriguing counterattack to Martin's theory of modern dance as dismantling logos through contemporary Dionysian ritual. Yet in the midst of Kirstein's Apollonian ballet rhetoric, Kirstein ran Ballet Caravan, which Garafola (2005: 18) explained operated very much like a modern dance company: it shirked a star system, its dancers

choreographed, and there were instances where they contributed to the management of the company. Ballet Caravan's first performance occurred in 1938 at Bennington College Summer Dance Festival, where Graham was one of the organisation's foremost teachers and dance makers (McPherson, 2013: 45). A year before Ballet Caravan's premier performance, Kirstein described Graham as 'the greatest dancer on this continent' (Kirstein, 1937b: 94). Clearly, he no longer found her work to be in the scatological category. Ostensibly, at Bennington, a physical détente between them took place. Kirstein and Graham's respectful relationship continued into the early 1940s. At that time, Kirstein wrote to Henry Allen More of the Guggenheim Foundation, which had bestowed a grant on Graham in 1932. Kirstein enjoined More to financially help the choreographer who, he explained, would not 'survive the war. I feel that she is one of America's greatest artists and that her individual survival is most important' (Kirstein, c. 1942, cited in Duberman, 2007: 386). Kirstein's championing of Graham, as will be discussed, did not last.

In the aforementioned article 'The Ballet: Tyranny and Blackmail' (1937), Kirstein wrote that ballet needed a 'scalpel' because beneath the tumefied Russified choreography, the healthy tissue of ballet technique remained. For Kirstein, ballet's 'scalpel' would save a ballet dancer, as a baby can be saved by a caesarean:

> The vocabulary of classical dancing is an artificial instrument, but so is a surgeon's scalpel. You can't perform a caesarian with a 'natural' instrument like your fingers even with a good manicure… The most and the least ballet training does is to prove the dancer's instrument (his *human body*) with the collective information of four hundred years of performers and choreographers who have devoted their lives to creating this science.
>
> (Kirstein, 1937e: 129, italics, author's)

Kirstein's metaphors of scalpel, caesarean, and surgery suggest his priorities for ballet, which could be deemed masculinist in that surgeons (and most recognised ballet choreographers) in 1937 were male.[76] Kirstein, the ballet impresario, increasingly carved out a scientific strategy for American ballet sustained by logic, reason and order that could not be tyrannised by the implied chaos of modern dance as exemplified by the Dionysian extravagances of Duncan and Wigman. Ballet, Kirstein explained, was a

> body of information, similar to the methods and practices of any profession, surgery, architecture, poetry and painting—in fact, a positive *materia choreographica*. It is a corpus common to any science or art form from which may be drawn materials for whatever purpose an operating practitioner wishes.
>
> (Kirstein, 1937c: 92)

As with all the disciplines that Kirstein listed, ballet was rooted in a canon, founded upon an order of epistemological thinking that gave its practitioners the tools to operate. Unlike modern dance, Kirstein intimated, ballet had a codified vocabulary, which he called—not once but twice—a *materia choreographica* (Kirstein, 1937: 92, 93). Since medical terms are derived from Latin cognates, Kirstein likely employed the Latinate expression as an alternative to ballet's French terminology to underscore its scientific credibility (as opposed to its European etymology). In Kirstein's most impassioned ballet apologia, titled 'Blast at the Ballet, A Corrective for The American Audience' (1937), he took Martin to task for not understanding ballet's scientific superiority:

> Mr. Martin does not care to realize that classic ballet is an exact science of

[76] Kirstein's analogy of a caesarean to a 'good manicure' demonstrates his insensitivity toward a pregnant female's body.

> theatrical movement and gesture, created by masters down to their pupils for four centuries… There is a *material choreografica* just as there is a *material medica.*
>
> (Kirstein, 1967: 76-77)

During the 1930s, Kirstein continued to respond, and to be incensed, by Martin's positioning of modern dance as ritual, as a renewal of American values, as contrasted with Martin's perception of ballet's superficiality and colonising oppressiveness. 'In Mr. Martin's two books', wrote Kirstein, 'historical facts intended for a condemnatory resumé were selected and arranged to present a case which rivals the style of the Reich's *Kulturkammer*' (Kirstein, 1938e: 165). The *Kulturkammer* in The Third Reich required all artists wishing to receive subsidies to join the Nazi party, and it barred all but 'Aryan' participants (Steinweis, 1996). Using these fighting words, Kirstein accused Martin of being a fascist whose books rivalled the mandates of Nazi bureaucracy (1933-1945).[77] In this accusation, Kirstein intimated that ballet was the Jew, the gypsy, the persecuted art form. Whether or not he was linking this 'persecuted' art to the tragic dimensions of Nietzsche's idea of Dionysian ritual, with its slaughter of the mythic god, Kirstein's anger was raw.[78]

[77] In Kirstein's book review of Curt Sachs's *World History of Dance* (1938), Kirstein wrote about the fallacy of dance returning to its ritual significance, explaining that, 'they [Martin and Sachs] have a profound resentment of dance in the theater' (Kirstein, 1938c: 75). Moreover, Kirstein chose to insult Sachs in the same way he had chosen to insult Wigman, by referring to the influence of the German philosopher: 'Dr. Sachs is in the tradition of the Nietzschean dance lover' (Kirstein, 1969: 306; Kirstein, 1938c: 75).

[78] In 1938, Kirstein critically described a recent lecture of Martin's in which the modern dance apologist argued for the genre to be on a 'level superior to that of a mere stage framed by a proscenium'; according to Kirstein, Martin also intimated that modern dance was 'not a diverting spectacle but an autobiographical rite celebrating the individual impulses of the dancers' (Kirstein, 1938e: 164).

Indeed, before Kirstein began his counterattack, Martin deployed Kirstein's self-described 'scalpel' to hack away at ballet, describing it as decadent and foreign in his texts *America Dancing* (1933) and *Introduction to the Dance* (1939).

In retrospect, Martin's virulent attacks on ballet seem excessive, given that he had articulated a powerful philosophy for modern dance, whose power, he believed, generated modern-day Greek tragedy through a balance of chaos and restraint; modern dance's best works, Martin argued, produced Dionysian catharsis.[79] That said, Martin's stabs at ballet can be understood as an expressed anxiety about modern dance's vulnerability, its relative youth compared to the centuries-old ballet. In 1937, the American yeast magnate Julius Fleishmann financed the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo with a $250,000 injection of cash, effectively buying it from Réné Blum and moving its centre of operations to the United States (Norton and Franklin, 2007: 29). By the late 1930s companies like the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo garnered larger audiences and toured more than the companies of Graham and Humphrey-Weidman. Martin's anxieties had real sources.

In pitting their rhetoric in terms that opposed Dionysian and Apollonian orientations, Martin and Kirstein mostly bypassed Nietzsche's actual theory: that the balancing of the Apollonian and the Dionysian would bring about the

[79] Martin wrote of Graham's *Deaths and Entrances* (1944) in *The Times* that it, 'produces the catharsis that has justified the tragic arts from ancient days, and does not need a name' (Martin, 1944a).

renovation of culture. Neither ventured into the complex territories which Nietzsche's aesthetics demanded. Art, for Nietzsche, could not be delimited by the word 'science,' in the way Kirstein often used it to describe ballet; nor could it be understood in solely religious terms as Martin often intimated in respect to modern dance. In 1872, Nietzsche described the misguided notion of those who perceived art as science, or art as religion, in the following passage from *BOT:*

> Will the net of art that is spread over existence, whether in the name of religion or science, be woven ever more solidly and delicately, or is it doomed to be torn to shreds beneath the restless, barbaric hubbub that is 'the present'?
>
> (Nietzsche, 2003: 74-75)

Nietzsche understood that art, in this case dance, was in the continual process of re-evaluation of its values. Martin and Kirstein would seem then, in their debates, to perpetuate the tearing 'to shreds' that was modernity's present condition. A return to consensus seemed impossible.

5.5 Kirstein's Neo-Apollonian Aesthetics: T.S. Eliot and Balanchine

Prior to Kirstein's determination to develop an American ballet company, he expressed enormous reverence for the Anglo-American author T.S. Eliot. 'He [Eliot] gives me a purpose in life', wrote the Harvard undergraduate in his diary on 4 January 1927 (Haslam and Kirstein, 1993). That same year Kirstein co-founded the literary magazine *Hound & Horn*, which was modelled after Eliot's *The Criterion*. Kirstein and Eliot then developed a correspondence, and the men met in London in 1929 (Duberman, 2007: 116-118; Haslam and Kirstein, 1993). Like Kirstein, Eliot

became fascinated by ballet, writing in 1928 that it is a an 'askesis' (discipline) and 'tradition' concerned with 'permanent form' (Eliot, 1964: 46) Kirstein demonstrated his absorption of Eliot's writings in numerous dance essays, which were devoted to valorising Balanchine and demeaning modern dance. Kirstein quoted and summarised ideas from Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), 'The Possibility of a Poetic Drama' (1920) and 'A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry' (1928). The following analyses, developed through a consideration of how Kirstein's prose interacted with Eliot's, are to support the theory that Kirstein's championing of an Apollonian creative impulse was inspired by Eliot, who was a reader of Nietzsche.

Eliot wrote 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in response to, and negation of, Nietzsche's championing of the Dionysian—that is, the emotional, intuitive, rebellious creative impulse (Zilcosky, 2005: 23). According to the German literature scholar John Zilcosky, Eliot's essay distorts Nietzsche's aesthetic theory in *BOT* (Zilcosky, 2005: 23). This seems to be the case, if one considers how Eliot discussed subjectivity. For Nietzsche, the creative impulse stems from an emotional 'Dionysiac process' in which the artist forfeits 'subjectivity' (Nietzsche, 2003: 28-29). For Eliot, it is the ordered, restrained creative impulse (aka the Apollonian) that expresses the forfeiture of subjectivity. Eliot's term for this act is depersonalisation (Eliot, 1997b: 43). As described by Eliot in two parts of his essay, the artist's depersonalisation will summon forth creativity:

> What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. There remains to define *this process of depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science*… *Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion*; *it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality.*
>
> (Eliot, 1997b: 43-44, 48-49, italics, mine)

As stated, great art behaves like science. Moreover, neither the artist nor the scientist depends on the "I". Rather they self-identify as part of an elite collective through an adherence to systems and forms (Eliot, 1997b: 40). 'To create a form', wrote Eliot, 'is not merely to invent a shape, a rhyme or a rhythm. It is also the realization of the whole appropriate content of this rhyme or rhythm' (Eliot, 1997a: 56). Earlier on, Eliot associated the concept of 'appropriate content' to an artist's creative mining of past 'parts':

> Whereas if we approach a poet without his prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but *the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously*.
>
> (Eliot, 1997b: 40, italics, mine)

Eliot, as quoted above, went as far as to say that 'most individual parts' of the artist's best work are drawn from his antecedents' works. Eliot's theory that great art functions like a palimpsest was one that Kirstein employed in his discussion of ballet's worth. Yet Kirstein could not simply argue that ballet's value stems from its traditions, given that in the 1930s he needed to excise his American ballet project from its Russian past in order to cleanse it from its foreign and aristocratic taint. Therefore, in 'Blast at Ballet' (1937), he employed the following passage from Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent':

> Tradition cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great

> labour… the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole literature of Europe from Homer and within it to the whole literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.
>
> (Kirstein, 1967: 1997b; Eliot, 1983: 37)

Eliot made clear that tradition was not just modern European. It was much older (from Homeric Ancient Greece), and it also concerned an artist's home country. This combination created a 'simultaneous order'. Eliot argued that tradition was not inherited (through a familial or national identity). This latter idea was key to Kirstein's defence of how ballet, a foreign art form, could develop in America's non-native soil at a time when its nativist sensibilities were in in the ascendant. Eliot pointed the way to how a translocation of balletic tradition could occur: It could be carried out through the democratic ethos of 'great labour'' it could be drawn from numerous geographic sources, past and present. Though Eliot's recipe required an extinction of personality, it advocated for a wide-ranging net of artistic input. As will be discussed, Kirstein employed Eliot's eccentric and rather contradictory theories about tradition to promote American ballet dancers and Balanchine. The brilliance of Eliot's essay was that he rejected the ancient construct of inherited tradition (as linked to blood lines, physical ties, and geographic lineages) yet at the same time, he underscored the importance of maintaining tradition. All of this could be carried out through a cool-headed process: depersonalisation.

With Eliot's new theory of how artistic tradition operates, Kirstein went to work in 'Blast at Ballet' in defence of ballet's rightful place in the United States. First, he pointed to Akim Volynsky as the ballet critic who defined the 'Tradition and the

Individual Talent' paradigm. Volynsky privileged the past (ballet's) and he articulated it through contemporary language (scientific allusions). Volynsky was one of the most 'accomplished and learned commentators' on ballet (Kirstein, 1967: 80). Like Kirstein, Volynsky saw himself in the role of ballet's defender at a time when it was deemed decadent. By referring to Volynsky, one gets the sense that Kirstein was appointing himself his heir.[80] Kirstein then took aim at another dance critic: John Martin. In contrast to Volynsky, who had earned the respect of the Russian ballet establishment, Kirstein wrote that Martin, 'has been assailed by the ballet-managers for his contempt of ballet as a theatrical form' (Gaevskii, 1992: 15, cited in Rabinowitz, 1996: 3; Kirstein, 1967: 73). Kirstein then attacked the 'new' modern dance, which had disrupted older traditions with its Dionysian innovations. In an equivocating aside, however, he mentioned that Graham was 'the greatest performer on this Continent'. Kirstein corrected himself a few months later, in another essay, when he wrote Graham's 'most difficult characteristics' are 'her frightening originality, her independence of *any* tradition whatsoever' (Kirstein, 1937b: 94, italics, author's). Graham, in other words, may be a great dancer, but she will never forward dance in the Elotian sense—as that which is built on permanent forms from the past. Eliot promulgated this idea in 'A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry', when he wrote the following about Russian ballet:

> Here seemed to be everything that we wanted in drama, except the poetry. It did not teach any "lesson", but it had form. It seemed to revive the more

[80] Joan Acocella and Lynn Garafola have pointed out that the ballet critic André Levinson was also a key influence for Kirstein. They write, 'In [Kirstein's] first article on dance, in 1930, he cites Levinson calling him "that invaluable well of information"' (Acocella and Garafola in Levinson, 1991: 20).

> formal element in drama for which we craved… If there is a future for drama, and particularly for poetic drama, will it not be in the direction indicated by the ballet?... *The ballet is valuable because it has, unconsciously, concerned itself with a permanent form*.
>
> (Eliot, 1964: 46, 47, italics, mine)

Four years before Eliot wrote 'Dialogue', Volynsky theorised, in his rhetorically titled essay 'What Will Ballet Live By?' (1923), that ballet's future creativity will be advanced through its adherence to form.

Kirstein's absorption of Eliot's formalist depersonalisation theory expressed itself at least three times in his dance writing between 1976 and 1984 (Kirstein, 1975: 22; 1991: 193; 1991: 204). In these essays, Kirstein argued that Marius Petipa, Michel Fokine, Vaslav Nijinsky, Igor Stravinsky, and Balanchine were formed by ballet's tradition (the *danse d'école*). As a consequence, they comprised an 'apostolic succession' (Kirstein, 1975: 22; 1991: 193; 1991: 204). As with the Roman Catholic bishops who carry on, in succession, the work of the apostles, whose mission it is to perpetuate and maintain God's teachings, these choreographers, argued Kirstein, likewise subsumed themselves under the higher impersonal aesthetic task of forwarding ballet tradition. Kirstein's definition of ballet tradition, as a canon created by the male choreographer who builds upon his predecessors' forms, possesses both a scientific, and patriarchal religious sensibility.

Eliot's ideas about the operation between tradition and talent were most fervently expressed by Kirstein in respect to Balanchine. Writing for a London-based audience in preparation for New York City Ballet's visit, Kirstein wrote in

'Balanchine and American Ballet: Part II' (1950) that he 'has *avoided expressionist personalization* as he has, for fifteen years, rejected innovation as a principal attraction' (Kirstein 1950: 18, italics, mine). Sentences later, while discussing ballet technique, Kirstein alluded to Balanchine's scientific style: 'The technical efficiency of American dancers is comparable to the general high level of our mechanization, but even automobiles possess personalities' (Kirstein 1950: 18). In this instance, Kirstein made room for the dancers' individual differences, but he nonetheless underscored that there was a relationship between Balanchine's ethos and a car factory's production line. In 'What is Ballet About: An American Glossary' (1959), Kirstein pushed his discussion of the relationship between a machine's automatic movement and the technical efficiency of dancers further:

> Our criterion, our classicism (in the American Century) a hundred years after Heine and Hoffmann, is the mastery of the human body over the machine, or the persistence of the body's possibility to move freely despite general dehumanization… it is the impermanence of mortal performance alongside its chances for ephemeral perfection which is its own subject rather than a narrative explication of fading flowers or distraught innocence.
>
> (Kirstein 1967: 10)

The 'American Century' is a byword for the United States' post World War II geopolitical influence. In Kirstein's passage about the 'American Century', the ballet dancer produces 'ephemeral perfection' through a machine-like technical mastery. Thus, American ballet is nativized, as it expressed a dancer's ability to supersede the machine through her un-machine-like mortality. This focus, as opposed to a nineteenth-century romantic narrative produced by the aforementioned writers, Heinrich Heine and E.T.A. Hoffman, created for Kirstein a twentieth-century transcendent aesthetic that underscored Eliot's theory that 'art may be said to

approach the condition of science' (Eliot, 1997b: 44).

Kirstein's discussion of the machine's scientific developments—to produce a powerful American economy—alongside his discussion of a new American ballet aesthetic—as achieved through dancers' advanced technical mastery—was likely informed by Balanchine's statements about *Agon* (1947). 'It is a machine', Balanchine wrote in the opening-night programme, 'but a machine that thinks… a measured construction in space, demonstrated by moving bodies' (Balanchine 1947, cited in Frank, 1999: 99). According to the musicologist Joseph Frank, Eliot played a vital role in Stravinsky's composition of *Agon*, which consequently shaped Balanchine's choreography, given that the choreographer did not construct steps until he possessed the composer's music. Frank stated the following about Eliot's impact on Stravinsky's process,

> Although his contribution to *Agon* is often slighted, it was only when Eliot suggested that the two collaborate on a ballet to complete Kirstein's trilogy that Stravinsky's interest was stirred… Stravinsky studied two [of Eliot's] 'agon' poems, first published separately in 1926 and 1927. The title of Stravinsky's ballet is almost certainly indebted… It was only after reading Eliot's 'agon' fragments that Stravinsky had a vision of the ballet he would compose.
>
> (Frank, 1999: 102)

The full title of Eliot's poem is *Agonistes: Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama*. Its protagonist Sweeney, according to Frank, 'must combat his eternal demons; he must face the discordant claims of humanness, animalism, and spirituality' (Frank, 1999: 102). Sweeney's struggle is between good and evil, which is elaborated on by Eliot through an oratory debate that Frank stated is related to the 'effective

rhetorical devices employed by Euripides' (Frank, 1999: 102). As previously discussed, Nietzsche theorised that the Greek playwright 'Euripides is the agent of tragedy's suicide' because he privileged logic, as a consequence of being influenced by Aristotle's teacher Socrates. The result, Nietzsche found, was a profound upsetting of the balance between the Apollonian and the Dionysian (Nietzsche, 2003: xiii). In contrast to Nietzsche, Eliot and Kirstein embraced order and logic in order to combat sentimentality and degeneracy.

More than two decades after the premiere of *Agon*, Kirstein seemed to revel in the neo-Apollonian quality of *Agon*, writing how it is 'An I.B.M. device' (Kirstein 1971: 242). Kirstein was echoing what Balanchine had said about *Agon* the year of its premiere: 'The IBM ballet, more tight and precise than usual, as if controlled by an electric brain' (Balanchine, cited in Vaughan, 1957: 15; Stravinsky 1962: 58). The circuitry that connected Kirstein to Eliot, Stravinsky to Eliot, and Balanchine to both Kirstein and Stravinsky created a radically new vision of ballet in *Agon.* Its ethos was scientific and new, but its steps, like the alphabetic keys of a computer, came from an older depersonalised rhetorical tradition, that of the *danse d'école*.

Another strong example of how Kirstein privileged Balanchine's orderly aesthetic came with his post-World War II essay 'Apollon Musagète' (1947). Kirstein wrote that Balanchine's development 'can only be compared in discipline and subsidy to West Point or Annapolis' (Kirstein, 1947: 39). In this statement, Kirstein suggested

that Balanchine's neoclassicism, in its precision and prowess, is akin to the United States' premier military and naval academies. Writing of the dancers in Balanchine's *Apollon Musagète*, Kirstein rousingly stated how they were 'Olympians in 1928; they remain Olympians in 1948' (Kirstein, 1947: 39). Kirstein was not only alluding to the upcoming restaging of the first Balanchine-Stravinsky ballet, made in 1928, he was also referring to the revival of the Olympic Games in 1948, following the victory of the Allied Powers.[81] In Kirstein's essay, the emphasis is on power rather than emotion, and on the triumph against competitors.

Given Kirstein's numerous arguments for ballet as order, and as related to American's growing military industrial complex, it comes as a shock to read 'Beliefs of a Master' (1984). The religious context of this essay, however, is self-explanatory. Kirstein wrote it as a eulogy for Balanchine, who died in 1983. Though the speech dispenses with scientific analogies, it hardly dispenses with analogies. They concern morality and immorality, heaven and hell, and they are, most significantly, employed to delineate the aesthetic chasm between ballet and modern dance. As the ultimate example of the oppositional strategies between modern dance's employment of Dionysian theory and ballet's employment of an Apollonian one, Kirstein's eulogy for Balanchine is worth brief consideration. It reads like a Nietzschean construction of oppositional identities. For example, Kirstein wrote,

[81] The previous Olympic Games occurred in Berlin in 1936 and was organised by Germany's Third Reich.

respectively, of ballet and modern dancers: 'Transparency blessed the good angels; opacity cursed the bad' (Kirstein, 1991: 204). Then Kirstein connected the angel of darkness to the modern dancer:

> Black angels fell to devildom, since they were made free to indulge in 'desire of absolute dominion over created things, in hatred of any rivalry of subjection'.[82] Their sin and our curse is not simple vanity but blind pride; in modern dance, this is an incapacity to learn or accept what tradition teaches.
> (Kirstein, 1991: 204-206)

It is possible that Balanchine's death resurrected in Kirstein's mind their beginnings, in the 1930s, when their goal of creating an American ballet company was received with hostility by modern dancers and certain critics. During this time, Kirstein's foe John Martin wrote that ballet originated out of 'secular interests exclusively' and that modern dance, in contrast, was nothing short of Greek tragic ritual reborn (Martin 1965: 174, 204). As if responding once again to Martin, Kirstein, in 1984, defended Balanchine's legacy, but this time in religious terms. 'Balanchine's ballets', he explained, 'can be read as icons for the laity, should we grant dancers attributes of earthly angels' (Kirstein, 1991: 219). Kirstein's connection of ballet to angels has no historical precedent. It nonetheless wedded ballet to Balanchine's Greek Orthodox Christianity; it also echoed Eliot's Christian statement that ballet 'is a liturgy of very wide adaptability' (Eliot, 1964, 47).

The idea of ballet dancers as angels has been taken up in the wake of Kirstein. The

[82] Kirstein quoted *Genesis* 4:12 'They [the infidels] wanted absolute dominion over all things, without having to submit to the will of the Creator. From that moment, the soil becomes miserly, unrewarding, sordidly hostile'.

titling of Jennifer Homans's widely-read book, *Apollo's Angels, A History of Ballet* (2010), appears to be an homage to Kirstein's 'Beliefs of a Master' in that both point to the connection between ballet dancers and angels. Because Homans's New York University (NYU) Institute for Ballet and the Arts inaugurates its annual fellowship season with the Lincoln Kirstein lecture, she has created another connection to the prodigious dance writer and co-founder of New York City Ballet. Yet a rich analysis of Kirstein's beliefs has never been carried out at Homans's institute, or elsewhere, perhaps because his writings hardly fit into the culture of political correctness of which Americans are currently sensitised and attuned to. Kirstein's belief system, as expressed in 'Beliefs of Master', are complex, prejudicial and evangelistic. In statements made by Kirstein, but also by Eliot and Balanchine, Christian morality and ballet are linked. In 1928, a year Eliot had converted to the Anglican Church, he wrote, 'Sufficient to say that any efficient [ballet] dancer has undergone a training which is like a moral training' (Eliot, 1964: 47). In 1984, Kirstein underscored the issue of morality and ballet, when he quoted Balanchine's famous response to a mother who wanted to know if her child would be a ballet dancer: '*La danse, madame, c'est une question morale*' (Kirstein, 1991: 1999). Then Kirstein wrote, 'Soon came hundreds [of students] like them. Meanwhile, Balanchine advanced the moral substructure on which his school's regimen was founded' (Kirstein, 1991: 201). Homans, consciously or not, took up these men's connection of ballet to morality when she wrote, ballet dancers' 'physical problems are thus never merely mechanical but have a moral dimension too' (Homans, 2010: xxi).

Returning to Kirstein's 1984 essay on Balanchine, he described the mother of modern dance Isadora Duncan as 'immoral' two times and identified Balanchine as 'moral' five times (Kirstein, 1991). Though Kirstein was no longer interested in forwarded an Apollonian-machine-order aesthetics of ballet, his proselytising went unabated. Balanchine's ballets, he stated, were inspired from the 'observance of the rites of Russian Orthodoxy' and these rites remained for him 'inborn and unswerving' (Kirstein, 1999: 201). Eliot analogised performance to Christianity too: 'I say the consummation of the drama, the perfect and ideal drama, is to be found in the ceremony of the Mass' (Eliot, 1964: 47). Homans followed suit, writing of ballet as a cross between baptism, asceticism, and divine blessing:

> If anything, ballet is purifying, every movement is physically honed and essential, with no superfluity or excess: it is a kind of grace.
>
> (Homans, 2010: xx)

Given Kirstein's stature in the New York ballet world, it would seem natural that his 'Beliefs of a Master', among other key essays, would have undergone a thorough analysis. This has not been the case, perhaps because the writer's legacy is connected to and burnished by two powerful dance institutions: NYU's Center for Ballet and the Arts and New York City Ballet. Connecting the two is Homans, who impacts both organisations, given that she is the director of the first, and writes, as of spring 2019, about the second in her capacity as the dance critic for *The New Yorker*. She, as was the case with Kirstein, wields impressive power.

Like Nietzsche, whose writings have been perceived as the ravings of a mad man, it might be said that Kirstein's zealot-filled rhetoric, which expressed his intense love

for Balanchine and his equally hateful feelings about modern dance, should also not be taken seriously. But this dismisses the impact of both men's thinking on others. Just as Nietzsche mourned the loss of the Dionysian-Apollonian balance in Ancient Greek culture and art, and this discussion fired the imagination of artists and writers to develop the field of aesthetics, it could be said that Kirstein aesthetic philosophising of Balanchine developed a multi-pronged thinking: Balanchine ballet as pure, as science, as institutionalised divinity. The next ballet apostle has big shoes to fill.

5.6 Martin's Détente with American Ballet

A slow détente between Martin and his perceptions of ballet began to occur in the 1940s. It was likely stimulated by the ballet boom in which across America ballet companies were being founded, such as Ballet Caravan (1936), Canada's Winnipeg Ballet (1939), Ballet Theatre (1940) and Ballet Society (1946) and extant companies, such as Serge Denham's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (New York), The Littlefield Ballet (Philadelphia), Ruth Page's ballet troupes (Chicago) and Lew Christian's San Francisco Ballet were reaching new audiences (Fried-Gintis 2010: 130-141). Martin's slow détente also occurred because of the increasing visibility of Balanchine ballets. In the 1940s, Ballet Theatre (now American Ballet Theatre), Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Paris Opéra Ballet, and the Balanchine-Kirstein venture Ballet Society were all performing his works. As a consequence, Martin revisited as a critic for *The Times* the Balanchine ballets that he had previously deemed decadent. For example, he changed his mind about Balanchine's *Serenade*

(1934), set to the music of Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings in C, Op. 48. In 1935, he wrote that it smacked of 'Riviera esthetics [sic]' (Martin, 1935). A decade later, he found the first two sections to be excellent (Martin, 1945d). In several cases, from 1945 to 1949, Martin pronounced that many previously seen Balanchine works were much improved. What Martin did not directly mention in respect to his reconsideration was how American ballet dancers working under Balanchine had blossomed into technically-expressive artists. Martin, for example, praised the performances of Balanchine dancers Maria Tallchief (Martin, 1949a), Nicholas Magallanes (Martin, 1945a) and Melissa Hayden (Martin, 1949b).

At the same time that Balanchine and his dancers' stars were ascending, Graham's star was diminishing. As a choreographer whose works were manifested through her body, she could no longer command the stage as she once did, although she still insisted on being the featured dancer. Then, in 1950, when she was nearly sixty years old, she badly injured her knee (Belfy, 1991: 47). Before that happened, Martin fretted over the fact that there was no heir apparent to her dancing prowess, writing that 'Martha Graham stems from no tradition, nor does she give rise to any… Every work, therefore, is essentially a solo' (Martin, 1944b). Earlier that year Martin similarly expressed a concern that modern dancers' training tradition was eroding as its dancers were decamping to ballet classes: 'Some of the weaker-kneed practitioners of the art have themselves capitulated to this theory, have haunted the beautician and the ballet class, forswearing content and creativeness with eager optimism' (Martin, 1943b). Martin, who in 1933 famously proclaimed

'the modern dance is not a system; it is a point of view', began to seek heritage and canonicity—like Kirstein (Martin 1965: 20). He wanted modern dancers to remain loyal to their roots. That hope was a fallacy, since modern dance artists since Isadora Duncan have self-identified as individuals working against any one tradition.[83]

Amidst these changes, Martin began writing winningly about Balanchine's neoclassicism set to the music of Tchaikovsky. For example, he praised Balanchine's *Ballet Imperial* (Martin, 1942b), *Serenade* (Martin, 1945b), *Mozartiana* (Martin, 1946b), and *Theme and Variations* (Martin, 1947). Perhaps Tchaikovsky's colatura orchestration provided Martin with an extra-musical atmosphere that he could literalise, narrate, and thus feel. In contrast, and into the 1940s, Martin found Balanchine's choreographic disquisitions on the musical composition's inner structure to be pedantic. Of Balanchine's *Concerto Barocco* (1941), set to J.S. Bach's Concerto in D minor for Two Violins, Martin wrote that it 'proved to be just one of those workmanlike pieces of pretty mathematics in which Balanchine specializes' (Martin, 1945a). In this neoclassical work, Balanchine renovated Bach's baroque world. The dancers realised this modernising ethos, becoming the plastic substance of the scored instrumentation, with its sharper timbre and pulse, its sense of mechanically-moving parts. Martin, perhaps, was seeking a baroque dance vision in *Concerto Barocco*, one that offered the perfume of a courtly ethos. And though

[83] For a thorough discussion about the demise of modern dance as a movement in opposition to ballet, the absorption of modern dance aesthetics into ballet, and the emergence of New York City Ballet as a purveyor of the avant-garde, see Sally Banes' essay 'Sibling Rivalry, The New York City Ballet and Modern Dance' (1999).

Martin admired Balanchine's use of Tchaikovsky, he wrote that *Theme and Variations* (1947)—set to the Russian composer's final movement of Suite No. 3 for Orchestra in G major (Op 55)— produced a dance experience that was 'Nervous, staccato, negating motor impulse at every turn' (Martin, 1945c). Martin did not see Balanchine's choreographed thrust and pull for this work as Dionysian, albeit in an Apollonian setting. In sum, Martin found Balanchine ballets that primarily expressed the music's order and structure as 'mathematical' (Martin, 1944c), 'cool, clean, difficult' (Martin, 1945e) and 'ultra-refined' (1945c).

The fall of 1945 was a turning point for Martin's reception of Balanchine, and Stravinsky. A month after V-J day, following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Martin wrote generally and euphorically of Balanchine and in manner that pointed to his extreme admiration for the choreographer's neoclassical aesthetic:

> One of the most distinguished contributions which George Balanchine has made to the ballet in general, as well as to this company in particular, is the crisp, crystalline self-contained smartness of movement which he has read into the traditional danse d'ecole.
>
> (Martin, 1945b)

How are we to understand this extremely positive generalisation, after so many negative ones? Did Martin see in Balanchine's 'self-contained' smart style an expression of America's proven scientific prowess? Or was he merely astonished by this particular performance of the Balanchine-Tchaikovsky *Serenade*, which produced the above-quoted words? Three years later, upon witnessing the Balanchine-Stravinsky premiere of *Orpheus* (1948), the critic seemed to have found

everything in a dance that he was looking for:

> There is nothing at all of the Greek style about it, yet it is in essence that reperforming of a ritual before the tomb of a hero in order to explain his worship which may have been the spiritual motivation of the tragic drama of the classic Greeks ... It is also… eminently of the theatre—the truly lyric theatre where action is translated into aesthetic significance.
>
> (Martin, 1948a)

Martin praised Stravinsky's music calling it 'remote, hieratic, tender' (Martin, 1948). About *Orpheus*, Stravinsky stated that 'the first part… was Apollonian, the second part Dionysiac' (Stravinsky 1975: 256, cited in Randell, 2014: 120).[84] Martin's estimation of *Orpheus*, however, had its dissenters. The influential dance critic Walter Terry found *Orpheus* cumbersome and boring (Terry, 1948). In contrast, Martin wrote about *Orpheus* again and again, with total approbation (Martin 1948b, 1948c, 1948d). A close reader of Martin's *Orpheus* reviews might understand that for this critic Balanchine's Greek ballet reminded him of Graham's *Night Journey* (1947) and *Cave of the Heart* (1946).[85] 'Not in many a long day', Martin wrote of *Orpheus*, 'have we been favored with a ballet of such distinction, such rich aesthetic satisfaction' (Martin, 1948b). Balanchine's *Orpheus* changed Martin's perception about the ballet master's choreographic range. He could be Apollonian and Dionysian. The musicologist Julia Randel wrote,

> Balanchine fastens on the tensions and ambiguities in Stravinsky's music to depict an Orpheus whose sexuality and even gender identity are called into question, who can scarcely perform the movements necessary to play his

[84] For a discussion on the balancing of Apollonian and Dionysian aesthetics in the choreography and music of *Orpheus*, see Julia Randel's essay 'Un-voicing Orpheus: The Powers of Music in Stravinsky and Balanchine's "Greek" Ballets' (2014).

[85] The dance scholar Ellen Graff discussed Balanchine's influence from Graham's Greek tragedy dances, and modern dance style, in 'The Four Temperaments and Orpheus: Models of a Modern Classical Tradition' (1985).

lyre, and who cannot sing at all.

(Randel, 2014: 121)

Indeed, Balanchine evoked a Dionysian understanding of gender, much in the way Duncan, Wigman and Graham had been doing since the early part of the twentieth century. As for Martin, he continued, after 1948, to embrace Balanchine to the chagrin of Graham and other modern dancers, who recognized that he had left a gaping hole in their movement, which initially defined its aesthetic project in opposition to ballet's (Morris, 2006: 44; Franko, 2002: 107-123; Graff, 1997; Banes, 1999: 94).

5.7 The Triumph of Apollo: New York City Ballet's Institutionalisation

In 1948, Balanchine and Kirstein's Ballet Society underwent a historical transformation. Following their presentation of *Orpheus* and *Four Temperaments*, the New York City Center finance director Morton Baum decided to give the troupe its own seasons at New York's centrally-located theatre, whose capacity numbered 2,750 seats (Kisselgoff, 1988). Balanchine and Kirstein renamed their project The New York City Ballet to acknowledge their new, prominent stature. Then, in the late 1950s, Kirstein became a key player in the creation of the Lincoln Center complex. America's first, large-scale performing arts centre would include a home for Balanchine's New York City Ballet. The New York State Theatre was built to the choreographer's specifications.[86] Even more significant was that Lincoln Center's

[86] The continuing elite status of New York City Ballet was reaffirmed in 2008, when its venue, The New York State Theater, received a $100M donation from David N.

visionaries, which included Kirstein, made no permanent place for modern dance. In 1963, Balanchine's company rose in stature once again: Kirstein directed the Ford Foundation in its decision to give a $7.7M million grant to New York City Ballet and other American ballet companies, all of which were connected to Balanchine (Garafola, 2007: 33). A year earlier, Martin had retired from *The Times*. He no longer had a large platform to discuss this situation. In response to the outcry among the modern dance community about this record-breaking grant for ballet, Kirstein explained that modern dance was a phenomenon of the 1930s:

> Thirty-five year later, the situation is different and many young dance students who would have been Modern Dancers are now attracted by the virtuosity and glamour of the academic ballet.
>
> (Kirstein, c. 1963, cited in Duberman, 2007: 558)

When Graham learned about the New York City Ballet's Ford Foundation grant, she called Kirstein. He recounted that she told him 'sweetly', before abruptly hanging up, 'that I was but a common thief' (Kirstein, 1963, cited in Duberman, 2007: 558).

Between 1948 and 1968, when Balanchine's multi-pronged aesthetic became institutionalised, he created, or set for New York City Ballet, works that continue to be considered masterpieces or audience favourites. This (partial) list is long: *Apollo, Four Temperaments, Symphony in C, Firebird, Bourée Fantastique, Theme and Variations, Scotch Symphony, The Nutcracker, Ivesiana, Western Symphony,*

Koch, who owns an agro-giant monopoly (Essig, 2014). Koch's personal wealth, according to *Forbes* in July 2018, was valued at $53.1 billion ('David Koch', 2018). The New York State Theater is now named the David N. Koch Theater.

Allegro Brilliante, Divertimiento No. 15, Agon, Square Dance, Stars and Stripes, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Bugaku, Movements for Piano and Orchestra, Tarantella, Brahms-Schoenberg Quartet, Jewels and *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue*. During this enormously productive period, Balanchine thwarted Kirstein's attempts to serve as a creative advisor (Garafola, 2007: 32). Relegated to the artistic side lines, Kirstein nonetheless continued to write about dance. In his six decades of professional writing, Kirstein penned at least 30 essays, articles and program notes, and four books devoted to the subject of Balanchine (Simmonds et al., 1978). In Kirstein's writing about Balanchine, he delivered a memorable message: Here is the talented individual, whose discipline and respect for order is advancing ballet in the United States through the renovation, or re-evaluation, of tradition. Arguably, Kirstein's championing of Balanchine's Apollonian aesthetics created a canon of thought, as evidenced in the ballet aesthetics of influential New York dance writers Arlene Croce[87], Jennifer Homans[88] and Alastair Macaulay[89].

[87] Arlene Croce, for example, wrote, 'Balanchine's technique is the only technique that prepares a dancer for the intricacies of Mozart to Stravinsky' (Croce 2000: 3). She intimated in this essay that Balanchine's style is the only one that can physically articulate the classical music canon. Consequently, it is superior.

[88] Jennifer Homans, for example, wrote, 'Balanchine was a world apart. His ballets are the jewel in the crown of twentieth-century dance: their depth and scope far surpass those of the dance made by Robbins, Tudor, Ashton, or any of the Soviets' (Homans 2010: 504). In this case, Homans was arguing, as Kirstein had, that Balanchine is the pinnacle of choreographic art.

[89] From March 2007 to August 2015, 36% of Alastair Macaulay's articles in *The Times* had been devoted to, or had mentioned, Balanchine. The following is my statistical tabulation of this senior dance critic's coverage, during this time, in relation Balanchine as well as other notable choreographers: Balanchine 36%, Ashton 24.2%, Cunningham 15.5%, Robbins 12.8%, Mark Morris 11.6%, Ratmansky 11.3%, Taylor 8.6%, Graham 6.7%, Tharp 6.5% and MacMillan 5.3%. In every case except Ashton and Cunningham, Macaulay wrote about Balanchine approximately

Kirstein's Apollonianism, his assimilation of T.S. Eliot, and his homage to American technology ('science') in his ballet metaphors appears to have triumphed over Martin's efforts. But the Dionysian aesthetics that Martin championed through his writings about Martha Graham, in particular, and modern dance artists, in general, live on today in a different form. They exist through the critical assessments of dance scholars, such as Sue Jones (2013), Kimerer LaMothe (2011), Arabella Stanger (2010), and Sue Jones (2013), whose ideas about modern dance, and also ballet, make references to and probing analyses of Nietzsche. It can be said that contemporary mainstream United States dance journalism has stayed clear of employing Dionysian formulations to articulate the how and what of contemporary experimental dance. Particularly after the Sixties, with its free-love mantra, scepticism toward institutions and recreational/experimental drug use, Dionysianism became linked with post-Romantic free-love hippie culture, with theatre productions such as Richard Schechner's *Dionysus in 69*, an adaption of Euripides *Bacchae*, in which spectators became involved in the artistic experience, but where the dancing was negligible. In this new context, Nietzsche's powerful idea of art as rooted in in cultic practice and Ancient Greek tragedy appeared lost or distorted.

Since the Sixties, and after the era's flurry of radical spectacles, mainstream United

three times more than the other dance makers listed. Macaulay, it should be noted, decided what he wants to review.

States dance writing has become less theoretical and more descriptive, as evidenced, for example, by the selection of dance criticism essays compiled by Marshall Cohen and Roger Cohen for *What is Dance? Readings in Theory and Criticism* (1983: 421-473), and the selections made in *Reading Dance* (2008), Robert Gottlieb's door-stop size dance reader. In place of writing dance criticism through a theoretical lens, as Martin and Kirstein attempted to do, dance critics such as Deborah Jowitt, formerly of *The Village Voice* and currently posting at ArtsJournal.com, and Siobhan Burke, in *The Times,* have developed styles that are suggestive of, but not dogmatic about, particular kinds of emotional experience.[90] While Martin sought theoretical certainty in his understanding of a new work's emotional expression, these writers do not seem troubled when they fail to grasp a choreographer's implicit meaning. They revel in the dance's expressive mysteriousness, the inherent tension of understanding and not understanding the work.

[90] For further discussion about descriptive dance writing, see Deborah Jowitt's essay 'Beyond Description: Writing Beneath the Surface' (2011).

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Assessing the Critical Outcomes of the Research Question

Did Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian formulations provide a meaningful way to articulate the tensions between modern dance and neoclassical ballet from 1900 to 1948? In respect to the self-understandings of the six figures under study, the answer seems to be yes, if one is to concede that they marred his theory of art being rooted in the balancing of these concepts.

The dance writings of Duncan, Volynsky, Wigman, Schlemmer, Martin and Kirstein attest to an absorption of Nietzsche' concepts in sometimes startlingly obvious and in other times perplexingly convoluted ways that, nonetheless, demonstrate how the Apollonian and Dionysian served as keystones to articulate their chosen dance form's value—and in opposition to what they understood as the other competing dance form's value. However, the application of this research question as a wholesale theory for these two dance movements would be absurd. Nietzsche's formulations cannot be treated as empirical data points to gauge the degree of impact his theory had on every modern dance and ballet figures in the early twentieth century. Moreover, Katherine Dunham (1909-2006), Kurt Jooss (1901-1979) and Agnes de Mille (1905-1993) did not, for example, perceive modern dance and ballet in opposition to each other. In fact, they used both genres in their work and expected their performers to be versed in both dance languages, among others (De Das, 2017; Walther, 2017; De Mille, 1980). If they used Nietzsche's terminology, as was the case with De Mille, it was done in a negligible way, as just another metaphor among many to describe dance (De Mille, 1956: 208).

Nietzsche likely would have railed against a methodology that quantified which artist was more Dionysian or more Apollonian, and how that orientation indicated an artist's predisposition toward one aesthetic movement over another. His binary formulations were not meant as signifiers for genres, as comparative markers for an artistic propensity, or as one-to-one oppositional terms (Apollonian purity, for example, is not the absolute antonym to Dionysian sensuality). It can also be argued that Nietzsche did not perceive the Apollonian and Dionysian as strictly fixed concepts: in his 1872 text, he pointed to how the application of ideas stemming from specific words shape cultural meaning, and that meaning can be read differently by individuals, societies and time periods (Nietzsche, 1999: 143).

Nietzsche employed the Apollonian and Dionysian to express the necessary tension within a culture's socio-political dynamic as expressed through art. Without this tension, he believed that an art work's ritual power diminishes; Nietzsche also surmised that an aesthetic tilted toward the Apollonian produces an imbalanced logocentric world view that breeds cultural malaise and enervation. As documented by scholars from diverse disciplines, Nietzsche's theory helped to foster the discipline of aesthetics in which the artistic impulses and receptions of art could be perceived as neither logical or illogical, Christian or pagan, Western or non-Western, barbaric or civilised, but a constellation of many influences. Nietzsche's Apollonian-Dionysian aesthetic theory fostered future thinkers to consider art through sociological, cultural, political and philosophical dimensions. Art, Nietzsche understood, was not about that which is right and beautiful. It was about us.

Yet the six figures under study employed Nietzsche's concepts not only to reveal their humanistic visions, they also used the Apollonian and the Dionysian as leveraged signifiers to underwrite their chosen dance expression's power. Additionally, they oriented themselves to the Apollonian or the Dionysian as a means to underline how their artistic modernity was rooted in classical Greece. This, ironically, was the very same false self-misconception that Nietzsche accused his German audience of carrying out in his 1870 lecture 'Socrates and Tragedy'.

6.2 Methodology: Structural and Argumentative Coherences

To argue that the employment of Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian formulations for the six figures under study was motivated by their quest to articulate their chosen artform's philosophy, I set out to understand the following: 1) what inspired Nietzsche to formulate these concepts? 2) how did his formulations shape his understanding of Ancient Greek tragedies? 3) what were the connections between Nietzsche's understanding of Ancient Greek tragedy and Germany's cultural condition in the 1870s? 4) how did Nietzsche's critical evaluation of Germany's late nineteenth-century culture impact future artists' understanding of their cultural conditions? and, 4) did Nietzsche's formulations have any substantial relationship to the art of dance?

The starting point of my investigation concerned the germination of Nietzsche's formulations. His 1870 lectures, as discussed in section 1.2, held the key. Nietzsche discussed how tragedy originated out of the song and dance of the Great Dionysia dithyramb. It gave rise to tragedy's chorus and to the individual actor. Nietzsche theorised that the chorus and the actor were tragedy's two most important ingredients because they often worked in opposition to each other. Performing binary impulses, and roles, the chorus and the actor revealed to the Ancient Greek polis the tensions of a complex world. The actor and the chorus interchangeably represented order and chaos, the rational and the irrational, spontaneity and calculation. They worked in a consonant-dissonant relationship.

In his 1870 lectures, Nietzsche shattered the hegemonic notion of a golden age as expressed in classical Greek culture. As an example, he argued that Euripides' tragedies, written under Socrates' influence, lacked ritual profundity. His tragedies skirted the necessary terror and mystery that produced transcendence, and catharsis. Euripides not only minimised the role of the chorus, his Socratic plays parcelled out logos, explication and, ultimately, didacticism. These values, Nietzsche summarised, were the very ones that had created a culture of malaise and enervation in his present-day Germany. The golden age of classical Ancient Greece, Nietzsche then intimated, was an illusion. Only certain tragedies had struck a balance, and they were the ones that revealed horror and madness, that caused

pity and fear as well as tendered logos and reason. Another example of the artistic-cultural balance that Nietzsche had discussed directly concerned the subject of dance. He argued that without dance and song's ritual element, there would be no well-run polis (Nietzsche, 2013: 2). The governance of bodies, Nietzsche intimated, was not just to ensure the survival of the polis, it was to illuminate the necessity of each of the bodies choreographed role within it.

With Nietzsche's 1870 lectures, his language was already sharpening into categories of difference. In *BOT*, as discussed in chapter 1.4, the Apollonian and Dionysian were formulated into writing. Out of the pairing of Dionysian (Dionysus)—which signified for Nietzsche ecstasy, sensuality, chaos and the communal—and the Apollonian (Apollo)—which signified for Nietzsche rationality, purity, order and the individual—came an endless stream of discourse. For Nietzsche the Apollonian and the Dionysian became like countries, with ever-expanding geographical boundaries of enquiry. They launched Nietzsche into the questioning of gender roles, the condemnation of science as absolute progress, and the championing of the arts as the fulcrum by which an enervated culture could revitalise its self-understanding, specifically through its practice of ritual, mystery, and mythological narrative. Nietzsche's 1872 text became a theoretical launching pad for others, such as nineteenth-century feminists, and experimental writers, who also sought to question and change perceptions about their societies' mores and certitudes.

Merce Cunningham reputedly said that 'speaking about dance is like nailing Jell-O to the wall' (Mainwaring, 2015). Yes. It difficult to write about dance, and it is equally difficult to parse many historical dance writings. Thus, in sections 2.3 to 2.5, I considered how scholars, trained in developing logical arguments through careful consideration of materials, discussed the subject of dance as treated by Nietzsche, the historical figure. I selected as my case study respected scholars in the disciplines of philosophy, gender studies and dance studies, with the understanding that more current academic writers have become interdisciplinarians. Their analysis of Nietzsche's references to dance proved illuminating. Among three esteemed academic philosophers writing about Nietzsche, they described Nietzsche's discussions of dance as metaphors for thought, with the exception of Higgins (Kaufmann, 1974, 1995; Spinks, 2004; Badiou in Clark, 2001; Higgins 1998). Among the Nietzsche scholars in the disciplines of gender studies and dance studies, however, the Germany philosopher's references to dance were understood quite differently. They (Thomas, 1988; Irigaray, 1998; Oppel, 2005) perceived that Nietzsche's discussion of dance signified for him the actual act of moving, to express varying emotional qualities; dance for him also symbolised a feminine principle at odds with a patriarchal ethos. Unsurprisingly, the dance scholars (Stodelle, 1978; Fraleigh, 1987; Burt, 1990; Ragona, 1994; Jones, 2010, 2013; and Stanger, 2010) under study perceived Nietzsche's references to dance as being about the art form; subsequently, they discussed those dancers who pointed to Nietzsche as an influence. In sum, sections 2.3 to 2.5 provided me with the means to consider

Nietzsche's references to dance from three points of view: as metaphors for blithe forms of intellectual thought; as discussions about gendered difference; and as a physical practice that, in itself, is expressive, multidimensional and inherently meaningful.

Given this thesis's consideration of how scholars possessed differing understandings of Nietzsche's references to dance, chapters 3 to 5 examine the adopted strategies by six dance figures in their respective discussions of modern dance and neoclassical ballet, as foregrounded by their uses of Nietzsche's formulations. These three chapters employ a model of analysis derived from sections 2.3 to 2.5. They consider the dance figures' respective writings, in which Nietzsche figures, through the prism of metaphoric language (in section 2.3); of gendered difference (in section 2.4) and as artistic expressions (in section 2.5). My preliminary thesis was that Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian binaries allowed the six dance figures to articulate their binary-oriented fixations about modern dance and neoclassical ballet. Out of these analysed discussions emerged a Dionysian modern dance language and an Apollonian neoclassical ballet language in which the writers overwhelmingly associated the former with the anti-heteronormative and the latter with the patriarchy.

Duncan's Dionysianism, as discussed in chapter 3, helped her to define her socio-political artistic project of being a solo, barefoot dancer. All of her personae: the rebel, sensualist, and the metaphoric female, who, she explained, signified

multitudes, corresponded to her notion of the Dionysian. She stood in opposition to hegemonic values, which she variously explained represented Victorian mores, academic ballet traditions, and bourgeois sexual restraint. Duncan marketed her Dionysianism strategically, like an advertising agent with a bespoke product. Likewise, Volynsky's Apollonianism, as also discussed in chapter 3, was created in opposition to his culture and his perceived stagnation of it. Yet in his estimation, Russia's cultural malaise was caused by its casting aside of its traditions. Volynsky fought to keep ballet in the artistic forefront. He castigated choreographers who crossed into the 'decadent' territory of modern dance experimentalism. A moralist, Volynsky's language was ferociously religious in tone. Ballet was his sacrament. Science was its redeemer. Volynsky's Apollonianism provided him with a platform to self-identify as the enlightened preacher bent upon remaking ballet through a dialectic that could be characterised as scientifically-laden sermonising.

Wigman's Dionysian, as discussed in chapter 4, was not as publicised nor was it as political and cultural in its expression as Duncan's. Yet it too was formulated to disdain ballet's stereotyping of the feminine and to critique the ubiquity of male creative directorship. Wigman expressed her creative impulse as a Dionysian mystery, suffused with chaos and female sensuality. Nietzsche provided Wigman with a language to discuss the terror, hunger, and even obsession of making work alone, as a woman. Meanwhile, Schlemmer's Apollonianism, as also discussed in chapter 4, shaped his *Triadic Ballet* project. He sought to redefine ballet through a technological aesthetic that would remedy the chaos and irrationality of war, which

he had directly experienced. The modern dance community of which Wigman was a leader was for Schlemmer an aesthetic danger because of its emotional excess. In contrast, Schlemmer hewed ballet to a language of order, emotional restraint and science—and in his *Triadic Ballet*, he transformed his dancers into cyborgs. Their bodies, made sleek through their costumes' melding with plastic, steel and wire, produced Schlemmer's sought-after vision of a technological utopia. *Triadic Ballet*'s central figure was a man-machine named The Abstract. Invulnerable and graceful, he arguably symbolised a futuristic Apollo.

Martin's Dionysianism and Kirstein's Apollonianism, as discussed in chapter 5, produced the clearest example of a modern dance versus ballet conflict as expressed through Nietzsche's formulations. Yet the New York dance writers, in comparison to the four other figures under study, struggled most with producing a philosophy of their chosen artform that was individually coherent. They did not speak for their own creativity, but overwhelmingly for Graham's and Balanchine's. Since both choreographers were experimentalists, who made diversely different dances, Martin and Kirstein muddied their various theoretical lines of thinking about the breadth of these choreographers' aesthetics. Martin, for example, lavished column space on Graham's expressive capabilities, but was parsimonious in articulating her formal dance language. Kirstein turned a blind eye to the raw, sexual nature of many of Balanchine's *pas de deux*, opting to describe the choreographer's partnering work as stemming from tradition. Neither was Balanchine's work purely Apollonian nor Graham's purely Dionysian, but Kirstein's and Martin's writings about their

preferred choreographer, on many occasions, intimated that it could be the case.

Whether they were fully aware, Martin and Kirstein further developed their discourses based on Nietzsche's binary formulations that had begun with Duncan, Volynsky, Wigman and Schlemmer's Apollonian-Dionysian infused statements about the differences between modern dance and ballet. Kirstein wrote about how Graham's dancing lacked all restraint (Haslam and Kirstein, 1932, cited in Duberman, 2007: 200). Martin wrote that Balanchine's neoclassical ballet was an exercise in the 'mathematical' (Martin, 1944c). Their assemblage of ideas also articulated gendered difference. Kirstein wrote how Graham's individuality was 'frightening' because of her rebellion against tradition, an assessment that would be difficult to imagine as a great concern in respect to a male artist (Kirstein, 1937b: 94). Martin intimated that Balanchine's work, as with other ballet choreographers, infantilised dancers, rendering them into 'pretty girls, pretty boys, pretty costumes and pretty music' (Martin, 1943b). In contrast, Martin wrote 'the modern dance, like any other art with a sense of responsibility, refuses to be pretty' (Martin 1968, 104).

Given that these six figures demonstrated the tensions between ballet and modern dance through writings in which they employed Nietzsche's Apollonian and Dionysian aesthetics, it is not surprising that their ideas about these two dance movements expressed gendered differences. The sexed binary, in which Dionysus is historically perceived as anti-heteronormative and Apollo is historically perceived as masculine, proved useful to their arguments about their chosen dance genre. The

nature of Nietzsche's binary formulations provided them with the linguistic tools to embrace their dance form's difference as a means to describe its perceived unique otherness.

6.3 Contributions to Knowledge and Future Research

This thesis contributes to the growing scholarship on Nietzsche and dance. It provides analyses of how Nietzsche perceived dance as a form of knowledge, on par with the sciences and humanities. Building upon the personal writings, journalistic texts, and scholarly discussions from and about the six dance figures, this thesis argues that ballet and modern dance are meta discourses, developed, in part, from Nietzsche's meta discourses.[91] For example, Nietzsche considered in *BOT* how language is a gendered construction. Ballet and modern dance, which are foremost about the body, are ideal sites to investigate how gender is performed and perceived. Thus, this thesis hopes to contribute to gender studies scholarship.

Future research springing from this thesis could be directed into a study about how the terms ballet and modern dance are becoming outmoded, and problematic. Choreographers, especially those whose work does not hew to a specific historical tradition, may find that neither ballet nor modern dance, or any other dance movement, aptly express their aesthetic projects. The term contemporary dance, consequently, provides a nomenclature that is distinctive for its lack of historical

[91] This methodological approach is, in part, developed from approaches created by Janice Ross (2007) and Alexandra Kolb (2009).

distinctiveness. A tabula rasa, the term signifies the now; it elides the burden of history. Moreover, contemporary dance is not a designator laden with gendered (and racialist) tensions. In contrast, ballet is historically understood as an artistic project led by white men. Correspondingly, the majority of modern dance makers, revered and otherwise, have been white women. The neutral quality of the term contemporary dance signals that it is all embracing. This theory is one that has been tendered by several of my students in my dance history courses.

A last thought about future research concerns The Juilliard School. It is at an interesting juncture. The school's president Joseph Polisi retired in June 2018 after a thirty-four-year tenure. The former New York City Ballet (NYCB) principal Damian Woetzel has taken the helm. Juilliard's Dance Division and NYCB have historically been at odds with one another. In 1962, when Lincoln Center invited The Juilliard School to become part of its complex, a concentrated effort by Kirstein and his colleagues to eradicate the modern dance-oriented Dance Division almost came to pass (Soares, 2009: 271- 280). An uneasy détente was made when NYCB's training programme, the School of American Ballet (SAB), and The Juilliard Dance Division were both given studio space on the third floor of The Juilliard School. SAB, however, was given double the number of studios; no office was appointed for the Juilliard dance director Martha Hill (Vander Veer and Hill, 2015). The subsequent competition between modern dance, as represented by Juilliard, and ballet, as represented by SAB, for real estate at Lincoln Center felt for decades like a turf war with ideological dimensions (Soares, 2009: 271-280). With this in mind, Woetzel

discussed in November 2017 his career in front of dance faculty and students. Reminiscing about his joyful days studying at SAB in the 1980s in the Juilliard building's third floor, he did not mention the presence of Juilliard's dance students, who shared the same hallways and facilities with SAB students. This awkward situation, unacknowledged by Woetzel, continued for twenty-eight years until, in 1990, SAB moved to the newly-constructed Rose Building on the Lincoln Center campus. With the power to shape The Juilliard School Dance Division, Woetzel's lack of acknowledgement, as a former SAB and NYCB dancer, about the poor treatment of the Juilliard Dance Division by key players at Lincoln Center and NYCB has caused concern.

Given these old, and arguably enduring, tensions, what impact they will have on the Dance Division is interesting to speculate. [92] In May 2018, Woetzel appointed a new dance director, Alicia Graf Mack, who had studied at SAB and had performed as a principal with Dance Theatre of Harlem, a company founded by Arthur Mitchell, a former NYCB principal dancer. Graf Mack, however, was not selected through a public competition, which was carried out for more than six months by a Juilliard

[92] In April 2017, the same month in which Woetzel became Juilliard's president elect, the Dance Division director Lawrence Rhodes was asked to step down from his position, one year before his contract ended. Upon his 'retirement', he was appointed Professor Emeritus of the Dance Division, following 15 years of service, during which time he raised the international profile of the school (Thomas, 2015). Rhodes, however, was not invited to teach or participate in the Division's curricular life, despite his being acknowledged as a master ballet teacher and director (Kisselgoff, 2019). Two years after's after his dismissal, Rhodes died of a heart attack, on March 27, 2019 at the age of 79. A notable ballet dancer, he never had a career with NYCB.

search committee, which had in turn selected three candidates. Woetzel nixed those candidates. By choosing Graf Mack to become the next director, Woetzel was sending a message to the Dance Division. He is in charge. Fortunately, and unlike Woetzel, Graf Mack has gone to college and has modern dance experience through her role as a celebrated dancer with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Graf Mack chose to become a modern dancer following a medical diagnosis of a rare form of arthritis, which made dancing on pointe, and being in a ballet company unsustainable.

It is worth noting that in the 1950s, Juilliard's original ballet faculty had no connections to NYCB. As of June 2018, five out of eight Juilliard ballet faculty had performance careers with NYCB or, in the case of the new director Graf Mack, had strong ties to Balanchine's company. Today there is only one full-time modern dance faculty member whose work is solely dedicated to teaching. In contrast there are three full-time ballet instructors with this job remit. Meanwhile, Juilliard Dance continues to state that its mission is to train its students equally in modern dance and ballet. Despite these developments and statements, its students are overwhelmingly disinterested in becoming ballet dancers, while only a handful enter historical modern dance companies, like Graham's and Limón's. Their interests are increasingly with commercial dance and Gaga, whose aesthetic is neither rooted in ballet nor mid-century modern dance techniques. In sum, a fascinating tension between two generations and at least two orientations toward bodily practice is taking place, once again in New York and at Lincoln Center, the

country's largest performing arts institution. If one is idealistic, as Nietzsche was when he wrote *The Birth of Tragedy*, one could imagine this development as an opportunity for this dance programme's re-evaluation through a re-balancing of opposing creative impulses, expressed through the tension between historical and evolving dance forms.

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